



US010540530B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Yoscovich et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 10,540,530 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Jan. 21, 2020**

(54) **METHODS FOR MAPPING POWER GENERATION INSTALLATIONS**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC .. G06K 7/1413; G06K 7/10366; G06F 17/11; H02S 50/00

(71) Applicant: **Solaredge Technologies Ltd.**, Herzeliya (IL)

See application file for complete search history.

(72) Inventors: **Ilan Yoscovich**, Ramat Gan (IL); **Yoav Galin**, Ra'anana (IL); **Amir Fishelov**, Tel Aviv (IL); **Yakir Loewenstern**, Ariel (IL); **David Braginsky**, Ashdod (IL); **Lior Handelsman**, Givataim (IL); **Ohad Gidon**, Netanya (IL); **Guy Sella**, Bitan Aharon (IL)

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

2,586,804 A 2/1952 Fluke
2,758,219 A 8/1956 Miller
2,958,171 A 11/1960 Deckers
3,369,210 A 2/1968 Manickella
(Continued)

(73) Assignee: **Solaredge Technologies Ltd.**, Herzeliya (IL)

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

AU 2012225199 A1 10/2013
CN 2071396 U 2/1991
(Continued)

(21) Appl. No.: **16/014,596**

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

(22) Filed: **Jun. 21, 2018**

United Kingdom Intellectual Property Office, Combined Search and Examination Report Under Sections 17 and 18(3), GB1020862.7, dated Jun. 16, 2011.

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2019/0095666 A1 Mar. 28, 2019

(Continued)

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 15/447,981, filed on Mar. 2, 2017, now Pat. No. 10,061,957.

Primary Examiner — Robert L Deberadinis

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Banner & Witcoff, Ltd.

(60) Provisional application No. 62/381,298, filed on Aug. 30, 2016, provisional application No. 62/303,017, filed on Mar. 3, 2016.

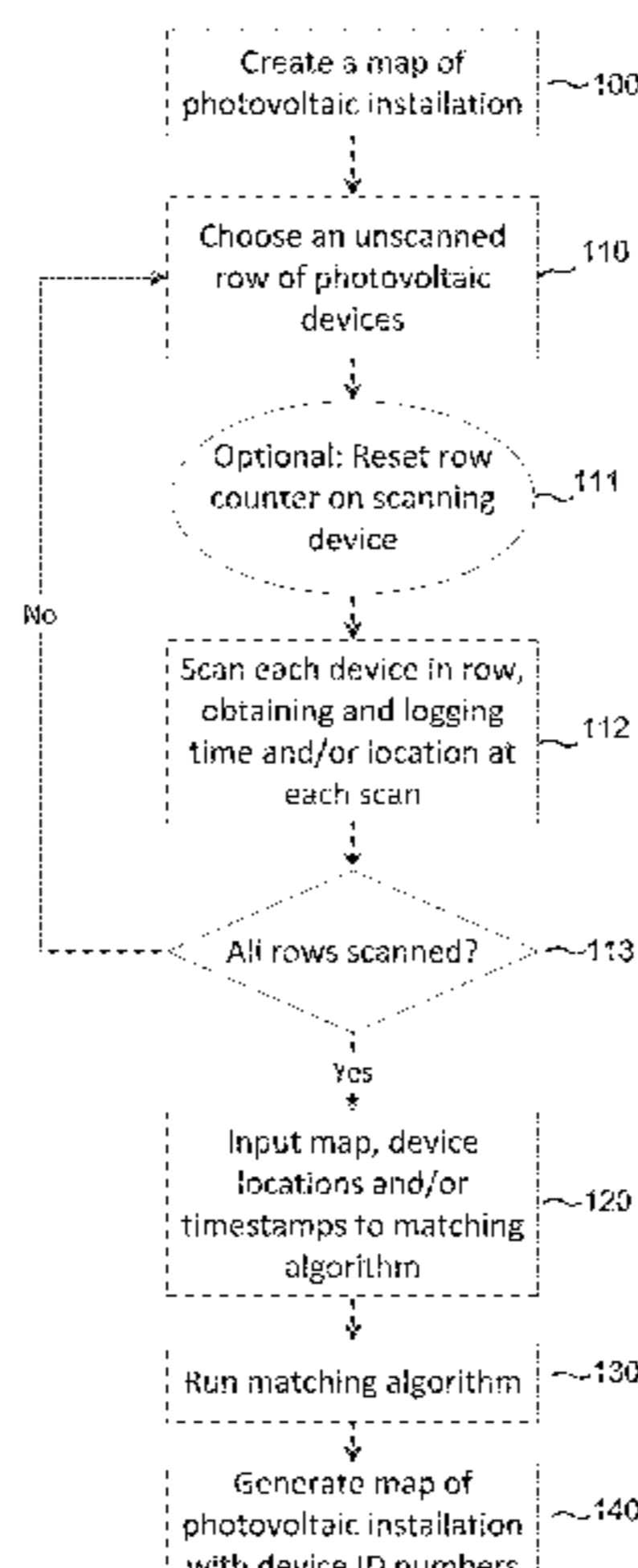
(57) **ABSTRACT**

Various implementations described herein are directed to a method for recording, by a device, identifying information of a plurality of components of a photovoltaic (PV) installation. The method may record, by the device, at least one of timestamps or locations corresponding to each component of the plurality of components. The method may generate, based on the identifying information, timestamps, and locations, a map of the PV installation.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G06K 7/14 (2006.01)
H02S 50/00 (2014.01)
G06F 17/11 (2006.01)
G06K 7/10 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **G06K 7/1413** (2013.01); **G06F 17/11** (2013.01); **G06K 7/10366** (2013.01); **H02S 50/00** (2013.01)

20 Claims, 30 Drawing Sheets



(56)

References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

3,740,652 A	6/1973	Burgener	5,804,894 A	9/1998	Leeson et al.
3,958,136 A	5/1976	Schroeder	5,821,734 A	10/1998	Faulk
4,101,816 A	7/1978	Shepter	5,822,186 A	10/1998	Bull et al.
4,129,823 A	12/1978	van der Pool et al.	5,838,148 A	11/1998	Kurokami et al.
4,146,785 A	3/1979	Neale	5,869,956 A	2/1999	Nagao et al.
4,161,771 A	7/1979	Bates	5,873,738 A	2/1999	Shimada et al.
4,257,087 A	3/1981	Cuk	5,886,882 A	3/1999	Rodulfo
4,296,461 A	10/1981	Mallory et al.	5,886,890 A	3/1999	Ishida et al.
4,346,341 A	8/1982	Blackburn et al.	5,892,354 A	4/1999	Nagao et al.
4,452,867 A	6/1984	Conforti	5,902,347 A	5/1999	Backman et al.
4,481,654 A	11/1984	Daniels et al.	5,905,645 A	5/1999	Cross
4,533,986 A	8/1985	Jones	5,917,722 A	6/1999	Singh
4,549,254 A	10/1985	Kissel	5,919,314 A	7/1999	Kim
4,554,515 A	11/1985	Burson et al.	5,923,158 A	7/1999	Kurokami et al.
4,611,090 A	9/1986	Catella et al.	5,930,128 A	7/1999	Dent
4,623,753 A	11/1986	Feldman et al.	5,945,806 A	8/1999	Faulk
4,639,844 A	1/1987	Gallios et al.	5,955,885 A	9/1999	Kurokami et al.
4,641,042 A	2/1987	Miyazawa	5,961,739 A	10/1999	Osborne
4,644,458 A	2/1987	Harafuji et al.	5,963,010 A	10/1999	Hayashi et al.
4,652,770 A	3/1987	Kumano	5,982,253 A	11/1999	Perrin et al.
4,685,040 A	8/1987	Steigerwald et al.	5,986,909 A	11/1999	Hammond et al.
4,686,617 A	8/1987	Colton	6,002,290 A	12/1999	Avery et al.
4,706,181 A	11/1987	Mercer	6,002,603 A	12/1999	Carver
4,720,667 A	1/1988	Lee et al.	6,031,736 A	2/2000	Takehara et al.
4,720,668 A	1/1988	Lee et al.	6,037,720 A	3/2000	Wong et al.
4,746,879 A	5/1988	Ma et al.	6,046,919 A	4/2000	Madenokouji et al.
4,783,728 A	11/1988	Hoffman	6,078,511 A	6/2000	Fasullo et al.
4,797,803 A	1/1989	Carroll	6,082,122 A	7/2000	Madenokouji et al.
RE33,057 E	9/1989	Clegg et al.	6,087,738 A	7/2000	Hammond
4,864,213 A	9/1989	Kido	6,091,329 A	7/2000	Newman
4,868,379 A	9/1989	West	6,111,391 A	8/2000	Cullen
4,888,063 A	12/1989	Powell	6,163,086 A	12/2000	Choo
4,888,702 A	12/1989	Gerken et al.	6,166,527 A	12/2000	Dwellely et al.
4,899,246 A	2/1990	Tripodi	6,219,623 B1	4/2001	Wills
4,899,269 A	2/1990	Rouzies	6,256,234 B1	7/2001	Keeth et al.
4,906,859 A	3/1990	Kobayashi et al.	6,259,234 B1	7/2001	Perol
4,910,518 A	3/1990	Kim et al.	6,268,559 B1	7/2001	Yamawaki
4,978,870 A	12/1990	Chen et al.	6,274,804 B1	8/2001	Psyk et al.
4,987,360 A	1/1991	Thompson	6,285,572 B1	9/2001	Onizuka et al.
5,045,988 A	9/1991	Gritter et al.	6,292,379 B1	9/2001	Edevold et al.
5,081,558 A	1/1992	Mahler	6,297,621 B1	10/2001	Hui et al.
5,097,196 A	3/1992	Schoneman	6,304,065 B1	10/2001	Wittenbreder
5,191,519 A	3/1993	Kawakami	6,339,538 B1	1/2002	Handleman
5,210,519 A	5/1993	Moore	6,344,612 B1	2/2002	Kuwahara et al.
5,280,232 A	1/1994	Kohl et al.	6,369,462 B1	4/2002	Siri
5,287,261 A	2/1994	Ehsani	6,396,170 B1	5/2002	Laufenberg et al.
5,289,361 A	2/1994	Vinciarelli	6,441,597 B1	8/2002	Lethellier
5,327,071 A	7/1994	Frederick et al.	6,448,489 B2	9/2002	Kimura et al.
5,345,375 A	9/1994	Mohan	6,465,931 B2	10/2002	Knowles et al.
5,391,235 A	2/1995	Inoue	6,469,919 B1	10/2002	Bennett
5,402,060 A	3/1995	Erisman	6,483,203 B1	11/2002	McCormack
5,428,286 A	6/1995	Kha	6,493,246 B2	12/2002	Suzui et al.
5,446,645 A	8/1995	Shirahama et al.	6,507,176 B2	1/2003	Wittenbreder, Jr.
5,460,546 A	10/1995	Kunishi et al.	6,512,444 B1	1/2003	Morris, Jr. et al.
5,493,154 A	2/1996	Smith et al.	6,531,848 B1	3/2003	Chitsazan et al.
5,497,289 A	3/1996	Sugishima et al.	6,545,211 B1	4/2003	Mimura
5,517,378 A	5/1996	Asplund et al.	6,548,205 B2	4/2003	Leung et al.
5,530,335 A	6/1996	Decker et al.	6,587,051 B2	7/2003	Takehara et al.
5,548,504 A	8/1996	Takehara	6,590,793 B1	7/2003	Nagao et al.
5,563,780 A	10/1996	Goad	6,590,794 B1	7/2003	Carter
5,604,430 A	2/1997	Decker et al.	6,593,521 B2	7/2003	Kobayashi
5,616,913 A	4/1997	Litterst	6,600,100 B2	7/2003	Ho et al.
5,644,219 A	7/1997	Kurokawa	6,608,468 B2	8/2003	Nagase
5,654,740 A	8/1997	Schulha	6,611,441 B2	8/2003	Kurokami et al.
5,659,465 A	8/1997	Flack et al.	6,628,011 B2	9/2003	Droppo et al.
5,686,766 A	11/1997	Tamechika	6,633,824 B2	10/2003	Dollar, II
5,696,439 A	12/1997	Presti et al.	6,636,431 B2	10/2003	Seki et al.
5,726,505 A	3/1998	Yamada et al.	6,650,560 B2	11/2003	MacDonald et al.
5,734,259 A	3/1998	Sisson et al.	6,653,549 B2	11/2003	Matsushita et al.
5,773,963 A	6/1998	Blanc et al.	6,655,987 B2	12/2003	Higashikozono et al.
5,777,515 A	7/1998	Kimura	6,678,174 B2	1/2004	Suzui et al.
5,777,858 A	7/1998	Rodulfo	6,690,590 B2	2/2004	Stamenic et al.
5,780,092 A	7/1998	Agbo et al.	6,693,781 B1	2/2004	Kroker
5,798,631 A	8/1998	Spee et al.	6,731,136 B2	5/2004	Knee
5,801,519 A	9/1998	Midya et al.	6,738,692 B2	5/2004	Schienbein et al.
			6,744,643 B2	6/2004	Luo et al.
			6,750,391 B2	6/2004	Bower et al.
			6,765,315 B2	7/2004	Hammerstrom et al.
			6,768,047 B2	7/2004	Chang et al.

(56)

References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

6,788,033 B2	9/2004	Vinciarelli	8,248,804 B2	8/2012	Han et al.
6,788,146 B2	9/2004	Forejt et al.	8,289,183 B1	10/2012	Foss
6,795,318 B2	9/2004	Haas et al.	8,289,742 B2	10/2012	Adest et al.
6,801,442 B2	10/2004	Suzui et al.	8,294,451 B2	10/2012	Hasenfus
6,810,339 B2	10/2004	Wills	8,310,102 B2	11/2012	Raju
6,828,503 B2	12/2004	Yoshikawa et al.	8,324,921 B2	12/2012	Adest et al.
6,828,901 B2	12/2004	Birchfield et al.	8,378,656 B2	2/2013	de Rooij et al.
6,850,074 B2	2/2005	Adams et al.	8,379,418 B2	2/2013	Falk
6,882,131 B1	4/2005	Takada et al.	8,395,366 B2	3/2013	Uno
6,914,418 B2	7/2005	Sung	8,410,359 B2	4/2013	Richter
6,919,714 B2	7/2005	Delepaut	8,410,950 B2	4/2013	Takehara et al.
6,927,955 B2	8/2005	Suzui et al.	8,415,937 B2	4/2013	Hester
6,933,627 B2	8/2005	Wilhelm	8,427,009 B2	4/2013	Shaver, II et al.
6,936,995 B2	8/2005	Kapsokavathis et al.	8,436,592 B2	5/2013	Saitoh
6,950,323 B2	9/2005	Achleitner et al.	8,531,055 B2	9/2013	Adest et al.
6,963,147 B2	11/2005	Kurokami et al.	8,570,017 B2	10/2013	Perichon et al.
6,984,967 B2	1/2006	Notman	8,618,692 B2	12/2013	Adest et al.
6,984,970 B2	1/2006	Capel	8,670,255 B2	3/2014	Gong et al.
7,030,597 B2	4/2006	Bruno et al.	8,710,351 B2	4/2014	Robbins
7,038,430 B2	5/2006	Itabashi et al.	8,791,598 B2	7/2014	Jain
7,042,195 B2	5/2006	Tsunetsugu et al.	8,809,699 B2	8/2014	Funk
7,046,531 B2	5/2006	Zocchi et al.	8,816,535 B2	8/2014	Adest et al.
7,053,506 B2	5/2006	Alonso et al.	8,823,342 B2	9/2014	Williams
7,072,194 B2	7/2006	Nayar et al.	8,835,748 B2	9/2014	Frolov et al.
7,079,406 B2	7/2006	Kurokami et al.	8,859,884 B2	10/2014	Dunton et al.
7,087,332 B2	8/2006	Harris	8,878,563 B2	11/2014	Robbins
7,090,509 B1	8/2006	Gilliland et al.	8,963,375 B2	2/2015	DeGraaff
7,099,169 B2	8/2006	West et al.	8,972,765 B1	3/2015	Krolak et al.
7,281,141 B2	10/2007	Elkayam et al.	9,291,696 B2	3/2016	Adest et al.
7,348,802 B2	3/2008	Kasanyal et al.	2001/0000957 A1	5/2001	Birchfield et al.
7,443,052 B2	10/2008	Wendt et al.	2001/0023703 A1	9/2001	Kondo et al.
7,456,523 B2	11/2008	Kobayashi	2001/0034982 A1	11/2001	Nagao et al.
7,485,987 B2	2/2009	Mori et al.	2002/0017900 A1	2/2002	Takeda et al.
7,495,419 B1	2/2009	Ju	2002/0044473 A1	4/2002	Toyomura et al.
7,504,811 B2	3/2009	Watanabe et al.	2002/0047693 A1	4/2002	Chang
7,596,008 B2	9/2009	Iwata et al.	2002/0056089 A1	5/2002	Houston
7,615,981 B2	11/2009	Wong et al.	2002/0134567 A1	9/2002	Rasmussen et al.
7,709,727 B2	5/2010	Roehrig et al.	2002/0148497 A1	10/2002	Sasaoka et al.
7,719,140 B2	5/2010	Ledenev et al.	2002/0190696 A1	12/2002	Darshan
7,759,575 B2	7/2010	Jones et al.	2003/0025594 A1	2/2003	Akiyama et al.
7,763,807 B2	7/2010	Richter	2003/0058593 A1	3/2003	Bertele et al.
7,772,716 B2	8/2010	Shaver, II et al.	2003/0058662 A1	3/2003	Baudelot et al.
7,782,031 B2	8/2010	Qiu et al.	2003/0066076 A1	4/2003	Minahan
7,783,389 B2	8/2010	Yamada et al.	2003/0075211 A1	4/2003	Makita et al.
7,787,273 B2	8/2010	Lu et al.	2003/0080741 A1	5/2003	LeRow et al.
7,804,282 B2	9/2010	Bertele	2003/0090246 A1	5/2003	Shenai et al.
7,808,125 B1	10/2010	Sachdeva et al.	2003/0107352 A1	6/2003	Downer et al.
7,812,701 B2	10/2010	Lee et al.	2003/0111103 A1	6/2003	Bower et al.
7,824,189 B1	11/2010	Lauermann et al.	2003/0116154 A1	6/2003	Butler et al.
7,868,599 B2	1/2011	Rahman et al.	2003/0214274 A1	11/2003	Lethellier
7,880,334 B2	2/2011	Evans et al.	2004/0004402 A1	1/2004	Kippley
7,893,346 B2	2/2011	Nachamkin et al.	2004/0041548 A1	3/2004	Perry
7,906,007 B2	3/2011	Gibson et al.	2004/0056642 A1	3/2004	Nebbrigic et al.
7,919,952 B1	4/2011	Fahrenbruch	2004/0061527 A1	4/2004	Knee
7,925,552 B2	4/2011	Tarbell et al.	2004/0125618 A1	7/2004	De Rooij et al.
7,944,191 B2	5/2011	Xu	2004/0140719 A1	7/2004	Vulih et al.
7,945,413 B2	5/2011	Krein	2004/0150410 A1	8/2004	Schoepf et al.
7,948,221 B2	5/2011	Watanabe et al.	2004/0169499 A1	9/2004	Huang et al.
7,952,897 B2	5/2011	Nocentini et al.	2004/0201279 A1	10/2004	Templeton
7,960,650 B2	6/2011	Richter et al.	2004/0201933 A1	10/2004	Blanc
8,003,885 B2	8/2011	Richter et al.	2004/0230343 A1	11/2004	Zaleski
8,018,748 B2	9/2011	Leonard	2004/0246226 A1	12/2004	Moon
8,035,249 B2	10/2011	Shaver, II et al.	2004/0263183 A1	12/2004	Naidu et al.
8,049,363 B2	11/2011	McLean et al.	2005/0002214 A1	1/2005	Deng et al.
8,058,747 B2	11/2011	Avrutsky et al.	2005/0005785 A1	1/2005	Poss et al.
8,067,855 B2	11/2011	Mumtaz et al.	2005/0017697 A1	1/2005	Capel
8,089,780 B2	1/2012	Mochikawa et al.	2005/0057214 A1	3/2005	Matan
8,097,818 B2	1/2012	Gerull et al.	2005/0057215 A1	3/2005	Matan
8,102,144 B2	1/2012	Capp et al.	2005/0068820 A1	3/2005	Radosevich et al.
8,138,914 B2	3/2012	Wong et al.	2005/0099138 A1	5/2005	Wilhelm
8,139,335 B2	3/2012	Quardt et al.	2005/0103376 A1	5/2005	Matsushita et al.
8,139,382 B2	3/2012	Zhang et al.	2005/0105224 A1	5/2005	Nishi
8,169,252 B2	5/2012	Fahrenbruch et al.	2005/0162018 A1	7/2005	Realmuto et al.
8,184,460 B2	5/2012	O'Brien et al.	2005/0172995 A1	8/2005	Rohrig et al.
8,204,709 B2	6/2012	Presher, Jr. et al.	2005/0194937 A1	9/2005	Jacobs
			2005/0218876 A1	10/2005	Nino
			2005/0226017 A1	10/2005	Kotsopoulos et al.
			2005/0275979 A1	12/2005	Xu
			2005/0281064 A1	12/2005	Olsen et al.

(56)

References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

2005/0287402	A1	12/2005	Maly et al.	2009/0066399	A1	3/2009	Chen et al.
2006/0001406	A1	1/2006	Matan	2009/0073726	A1	3/2009	Babcock
2006/0017327	A1	1/2006	Siri et al.	2009/0078300	A1	3/2009	Ang et al.
2006/0034106	A1	2/2006	Johnson	2009/0084570	A1	4/2009	Gherardini et al.
2006/0038692	A1	2/2006	Schnetker	2009/0097172	A1	4/2009	Bremicker et al.
2006/0043792	A1	3/2006	Hjort et al.	2009/0102440	A1	4/2009	Coles
2006/0043942	A1	3/2006	Cohen	2009/0121549	A1	5/2009	Leonard
2006/0053447	A1	3/2006	Krzyzanowski et al.	2009/0141522	A1	6/2009	Adest et al.
2006/0066349	A1	3/2006	Murakami	2009/0160258	A1	6/2009	Allen et al.
2006/0068239	A1	3/2006	Norimatsu et al.	2009/0179500	A1	7/2009	Ragonese et al.
2006/0077046	A1	4/2006	Endo	2009/0184746	A1	7/2009	Fahrenbruch
2006/0108979	A1	5/2006	Daniel et al.	2009/0190275	A1	7/2009	Gilmore et al.
2006/0109009	A1	5/2006	Banke et al.	2009/0217965	A1	9/2009	Dougal et al.
2006/0113843	A1	6/2006	Beveridge	2009/0224817	A1	9/2009	Nakamura et al.
2006/0113979	A1	6/2006	Ishigaki et al.	2009/0242011	A1	10/2009	Proisy et al.
2006/0118162	A1	6/2006	Saelzer et al.	2009/0243547	A1	10/2009	Andelfinger
2006/0132102	A1	6/2006	Harvey	2009/0295225	A1	12/2009	Asplund et al.
2006/0149396	A1	7/2006	Templeton	2009/0325003	A1	12/2009	Aberle et al.
2006/0162772	A1	7/2006	Presher et al.	2010/0001587	A1	1/2010	Casey et al.
2006/0163946	A1	7/2006	Henne et al.	2010/0020576	A1	1/2010	Falk
2006/0171182	A1	8/2006	Siri et al.	2010/0026736	A1	2/2010	Plut
2006/0174939	A1	8/2006	Matan	2010/0038907	A1	2/2010	Hunt et al.
2006/0176716	A1	8/2006	Balakrishnan et al.	2010/0052735	A1	3/2010	Burkland et al.
2006/0185727	A1	8/2006	Matan	2010/0060000	A1	3/2010	Scholte-Wassink
2006/0192540	A1	8/2006	Balakrishnan et al.	2010/0071742	A1	3/2010	de Rooij et al.
2006/0208660	A1	9/2006	Shinmura et al.	2010/0085670	A1	4/2010	Palaniswami et al.
2006/0227577	A1	10/2006	Horiuchi et al.	2010/0124087	A1	5/2010	Falk
2006/0227578	A1	10/2006	Datta et al.	2010/0126550	A1	5/2010	Foss
2006/0235717	A1	10/2006	Sharma	2010/0127571	A1	5/2010	Hadar et al.
2006/0237058	A1	10/2006	McClintock et al.	2010/0132761	A1	6/2010	Echizenya et al.
2006/0266408	A1	11/2006	Horne et al.	2010/0139743	A1	6/2010	Hadar et al.
2006/0267515	A1	11/2006	Burke et al.	2010/0141041	A1	6/2010	Bose et al.
2007/0013349	A1	1/2007	Bassett	2010/0147362	A1	6/2010	King et al.
2007/0029636	A1	2/2007	Kanemaru et al.	2010/0154858	A1	6/2010	Jain
2007/0030068	A1	2/2007	Motonobu et al.	2010/0176773	A1	7/2010	Capel
2007/0044837	A1	3/2007	Simburger et al.	2010/0181957	A1	7/2010	Goeltner
2007/0075711	A1	4/2007	Blanc et al.	2010/0195361	A1	8/2010	Stem
2007/0081364	A1	4/2007	Andreycak	2010/0206378	A1	8/2010	Erickson, Jr. et al.
2007/0085523	A1	4/2007	Scoones et al.	2010/0214808	A1	8/2010	Rodriguez
2007/0089778	A1	4/2007	Horne et al.	2010/0217551	A1	8/2010	Goff et al.
2007/0115635	A1	5/2007	Low et al.	2010/0241375	A1	9/2010	Kumar et al.
2007/0133241	A1	6/2007	Mumtaz et al.	2010/0244575	A1	9/2010	Coccia et al.
2007/0159866	A1	7/2007	Siri	2010/0246223	A1	9/2010	Xuan
2007/0164750	A1	7/2007	Chen et al.	2010/0264736	A1	10/2010	Mumtaz et al.
2007/0165347	A1	7/2007	Wendt et al.	2010/0286836	A1	11/2010	Shaver, II et al.
2007/0205778	A1	9/2007	Fabbro et al.	2010/0288327	A1	11/2010	Lisi et al.
2007/0227574	A1	10/2007	Cart	2011/0006743	A1	1/2011	Fabbro
2007/0236187	A1	10/2007	Wai et al.	2011/0031816	A1	2/2011	Buthker et al.
2007/0241720	A1	10/2007	Sakamoto et al.	2011/0037600	A1	2/2011	Takehara et al.
2007/0247135	A1	10/2007	Koga	2011/0043172	A1	2/2011	Dearn
2007/0247877	A1	10/2007	Kwon et al.	2011/0056533	A1	3/2011	Kuan
2007/0273339	A1	11/2007	Haines	2011/0061705	A1	3/2011	Croft et al.
2007/0273342	A1	11/2007	Kataoka et al.	2011/0068633	A1	3/2011	Quardt et al.
2007/0290636	A1	12/2007	Beck et al.	2011/0079263	A1	4/2011	Avrutsky
2008/0024098	A1	1/2008	Hojo	2011/0080147	A1	4/2011	Schoenlinner et al.
2008/0088184	A1	4/2008	Tung et al.	2011/0108087	A1	5/2011	Croft et al.
2008/0097655	A1	4/2008	Hadar et al.	2011/0115295	A1	5/2011	Moon et al.
2008/0142071	A1	6/2008	Dorn et al.	2011/0125431	A1	5/2011	Adest et al.
2008/0143188	A1	6/2008	Adest et al.	2011/0198935	A1	8/2011	Hinman et al.
2008/0143462	A1	6/2008	Belisle et al.	2011/0232714	A1	9/2011	Bhavaraju et al.
2008/0179949	A1	7/2008	Besser et al.	2011/0240100	A1	10/2011	Lu et al.
2008/0186004	A1	8/2008	Williams	2011/0254372	A1	10/2011	Haines et al.
2008/0192519	A1	8/2008	Iwata et al.	2011/0260866	A1	10/2011	Avrutsky et al.
2008/0218152	A1	9/2008	Bo	2011/0267859	A1	11/2011	Chapman
2008/0236647	A1	10/2008	Gibson et al.	2011/0273017	A1	11/2011	Borup et al.
2008/0236648	A1	10/2008	Klein et al.	2011/0278955	A1	11/2011	Signorelli et al.
2008/0238195	A1	10/2008	Shaver et al.	2011/0290317	A1	12/2011	Naumovitz et al.
2008/0246460	A1	10/2008	Smith	2011/0298288	A1	12/2011	Cho et al.
2008/0246463	A1	10/2008	Sinton et al.	2012/0019966	A1	1/2012	DeBoer
2008/0252273	A1	10/2008	Woo et al.	2012/0026769	A1	2/2012	Schroeder et al.
2008/0297963	A1	12/2008	Lee et al.	2012/0033392	A1	2/2012	Golubovic et al.
2008/0298608	A1	12/2008	Wilcox	2012/0043818	A1	2/2012	Stratakos et al.
2009/0014050	A1	1/2009	Haaf	2012/0048325	A1	3/2012	Matsuo et al.
2009/0014057	A1	1/2009	Croft et al.	2012/0049627	A1	3/2012	Matsuo et al.
2009/0015071	A1	1/2009	Iwata et al.	2012/0049801	A1	3/2012	Chang
				2012/0063177	A1	3/2012	Garrity
				2012/0080943	A1	4/2012	Phadke
				2012/0081009	A1	4/2012	Shteynberg et al.
				2012/0081933	A1	4/2012	Garrity

(56)

References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

2012/0081934 A1 4/2012 Garrity et al.
 2012/0081937 A1 4/2012 Phadke
 2012/0087159 A1 4/2012 Chapman et al.
 2012/0091810 A1 4/2012 Aiello et al.
 2012/0091817 A1 4/2012 Seymour et al.
 2012/0098344 A1 4/2012 Bergveld et al.
 2012/0104863 A1 5/2012 Yuan
 2012/0113554 A1 5/2012 Paoletti et al.
 2012/0133372 A1 5/2012 Tsai et al.
 2012/0138123 A1 6/2012 Newdoll et al.
 2012/0139343 A1 6/2012 Adest et al.
 2012/0146583 A1 6/2012 Gaul et al.
 2012/0161526 A1 6/2012 Huang et al.
 2012/0169124 A1 7/2012 Nakashima et al.
 2012/0187769 A1 7/2012 Spannhake et al.
 2012/0194003 A1 8/2012 Schmidt et al.
 2012/0217973 A1 8/2012 Avrutsky
 2012/0274145 A1 11/2012 Taddeo
 2012/0274264 A1 11/2012 Mun et al.
 2012/0280571 A1 11/2012 Hargis
 2013/0002335 A1 1/2013 DeGraaff
 2013/0038124 A1 2/2013 Newdoll et al.
 2013/0049710 A1 2/2013 Kraft et al.
 2013/0063119 A1 3/2013 Lubomirsky
 2013/0082724 A1 4/2013 Noda et al.
 2013/0321013 A1 12/2013 Pisklak et al.
 2013/0342389 A1 12/2013 Cojocar et al.
 2013/0346054 A1 12/2013 Mumtaz
 2014/0097808 A1 4/2014 Clark et al.
 2014/0111220 A1 4/2014 Andersen
 2014/0167715 A1 6/2014 Wu et al.
 2014/0265629 A1 9/2014 Gazit et al.
 2014/0265638 A1 9/2014 Orr et al.
 2015/0188415 A1 7/2015 Abido et al.

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

CN 1236213 A 11/1999
 CN 1309451 A 8/2001
 CN 1122905 C 10/2003
 CN 1474492 A 2/2004
 CN 1523726 A 8/2004
 CN 1588773 A 3/2005
 CN 2706955 Y 6/2005
 CN 1838191 A 9/2006
 CN 1902809 A 1/2007
 CN 1933315 A 3/2007
 CN 2891438 Y 4/2007
 CN 101107712 A 1/2008
 CN 101128974 A 2/2008
 CN 101136129 A 3/2008
 CN 101180781 A 5/2008
 CN 101257221 A 9/2008
 CN 201167381 Y 12/2008
 CN 101488271 A 7/2009
 CN 101521459 A 9/2009
 CN 101523230 A 9/2009
 CN 101672252 A 3/2010
 CN 101779291 A 7/2010
 CN 101847939 A 9/2010
 CN 201601477 U 10/2010
 CN 201623478 U 11/2010
 CN 101902051 A 12/2010
 CN 201663167 U 12/2010
 CN 101939660 A 1/2011
 CN 101951011 A 1/2011
 CN 101951190 A 1/2011
 CN 101953051 A 1/2011
 CN 101976855 A 2/2011
 CN 101976952 A 2/2011
 CN 101980409 A 2/2011
 CN 102089883 A 6/2011
 CN 102148584 A 8/2011
 CN 201926948 U 8/2011
 CN 201956938 U 8/2011

CN 202034903 U 11/2011
 CN 102273039 A 12/2011
 CN 102362550 A 2/2012
 CN 202178274 U 3/2012
 CN 102474112 A 5/2012
 CN 202871823 U 4/2013
 DE 1161639 B 1/1964
 DE 4041672 A1 6/1992
 DE 19737286 A1 3/1999
 DE 10219956 A1 4/2003
 DE 102004053942 A1 5/2006
 DE 20 2005 020161 U1 11/2006
 DE 102005036153 A1 12/2006
 DE 102005030907 A1 1/2007
 DE 202007002077 U1 4/2008
 DE 102006060815 A1 6/2008
 DE 102007051134 A1 3/2009
 DE 202008012345 U1 3/2009
 DE 102007037130 B3 4/2009
 DE 202009007318 U1 8/2009
 DE 102008057874 A1 5/2010
 DE 102009051186 A1 5/2010
 DE 102009022569 A1 12/2010
 DE 102010023549 A1 12/2011
 EP 0418612 A1 3/1991
 EP 419093 A2 3/1991
 EP 420295 A1 4/1991
 EP 604777 A1 7/1994
 EP 756178 A2 1/1997
 EP 827254 A2 3/1998
 EP 1039361 A1 9/2000
 EP 1039621 A2 9/2000
 EP 1047179 A1 10/2000
 EP 1330009 A2 7/2003
 EP 1503490 A1 2/2005
 EP 1531542 A2 5/2005
 EP 1531545 A2 5/2005
 EP 1642355 A2 4/2006
 EP 1657557 A1 5/2006
 EP 1657797 A1 5/2006
 EP 1887675 A2 2/2008
 EP 1914857 A1 4/2008
 EP 2048679 A1 4/2009
 EP 2130286 A1 12/2009
 EP 2135296 A2 12/2009
 EP 2234237 A1 9/2010
 EP 2249457 A1 11/2010
 EP 2256819 A1 12/2010
 EP 2315328 A2 4/2011
 EP 2386122 A2 11/2011
 EP 2393178 A2 12/2011
 ES 2249147 A1 3/2006
 ES 2249149 A1 3/2006
 GB 2128017 A 4/1984
 GB 2476508 A 6/2011
 GB 2480015 B 12/2011
 JP 61065320 A 4/1986
 JP 8009557 A 1/1996
 JP H10308523 A 11/1998
 JP 11041832 A 2/1999
 JP 11103538 A 4/1999
 JP 11206038 A 7/1999
 JP 11289891 A 10/1999
 JP 11318042 A 11/1999
 JP 2000174307 A 6/2000
 JP 2000339044 A 12/2000
 JP 2001189476 A 7/2001
 JP 2002300735 A 10/2002
 JP 2003124492 A 4/2003
 JP 2003134667 A 5/2003
 JP 2003282916 A 10/2003
 JP 2004194500 A 7/2004
 JP 2004260944 A 9/2004
 JP 2004334704 A 11/2004
 JP 2005192314 A 7/2005
 JP 2006278755 A 10/2006
 JP 2007058845 A 3/2007
 JP 4174227H B2 10/2008
 JP 2011-249790 A 12/2011

(56)

References Cited

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

JP	2012178535	A	9/2012
KR	101073143	B1	10/2011
TW	497326	B	8/2002
TW	200913291	A	3/2009
WO	1993013587	A1	7/1993
WO	95/25374	A1	9/1995
WO	95/34121	A1	12/1995
WO	1996013093	A1	5/1996
WO	1998023021	A2	5/1998
WO	00/00839	A1	1/2000
WO	00/21178	A1	4/2000
WO	01/13502	A1	2/2001
WO	0231517		4/2002
WO	2003050938	A2	6/2003
WO	2003071655	A1	8/2003
WO	2003098703		11/2003
WO	2004023278	A2	3/2004
WO	2004090993	A2	10/2004
WO	2004098261	A2	11/2004
WO	2004107543	A2	12/2004
WO	2005076444	A1	8/2005
WO	2005076445	A1	8/2005
WO	2005119278	A1	12/2005
WO	2006005125	A1	1/2006
WO	2006007198	A1	1/2006
WO	2006/074561	A1	7/2006
WO	2006078685	A2	7/2006
WO	2006130520	A2	12/2006
WO	2007006564	A2	1/2007
WO	2007/020419	A1	2/2007
WO	2007048421	A2	5/2007
WO	2007073951	A1	7/2007
WO	2007084196	A2	7/2007
WO	2007090476	A2	8/2007
WO	2007113358	A1	10/2007
WO	2008008528	A2	1/2008
WO	2008/046370	A1	4/2008
WO	2008119034	A1	10/2008
WO	2008121266	A2	10/2008
WO	2008132551	A2	11/2008
WO	2008132553	A2	11/2008
WO	2009011780	A2	1/2009
WO	2009/026602	A1	3/2009
WO	2009046533	A1	4/2009
WO	2009051870	A1	4/2009
WO	2009/059877	A1	5/2009
WO	2009118682	A2	10/2009
WO	2009118683	A2	10/2009
WO	2009136358	A1	11/2009
WO	2010/002960	A1	1/2010
WO	2010/003941	A2	1/2010
WO	2010020385	A2	2/2010
WO	2010/071855	A2	6/2010
WO	2010065043	A1	6/2010
WO	2010065388	A1	6/2010
WO	2010072717	A1	7/2010
WO	2010078303	A2	7/2010
WO	2010080672	A2	7/2010
WO	2010094012	A1	8/2010
WO	2010118503	A1	10/2010
WO	2010/132369	A1	11/2010
WO	20100134057	A1	11/2010
WO	2011011711	A2	1/2011
WO	2011017721	A1	2/2011
WO	2011019936	A1	2/2011
WO	2011023732	A2	3/2011
WO	2011044641	A1	4/2011
WO	2011059067	A1	5/2011
WO	2011074025	A1	6/2011
WO	2011076707	A2	6/2011
WO	2011089607	A1	7/2011
WO	1998023021	A	7/2013

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

QT Technical Application Papers, "ABB Circuit-Breakers for Direct current Applications", ABB SACE S.p.A., An ABB Group Company, L.V. Breakers, Via Baioni, 35, 24123 Bergamo-Italy, Tel.: +39 035.395.111—Telefax: +39 035.395.306-433, Sep. 2007.

Woyte, et al., "Mains Monitoring and Protection in a European Context", 17th European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference and Exhibition, Munich, Germany, Oct. 22-26, 2001, ACHIM, Woyte, et al., pp. 1-4.

"Implementation and testing of Anti-Islanding Algorithms for IEEE 929-2000 Compliance of Single Phase Photovoltaic Inverters", Raymond M. Hudson, Photovoltaic Specialists Conference, 2002. Conference Record of the Twenty-Ninth IEEE, May 19-24, 2002.

Fairchild Semiconductor, Application Note 9016, IGBT Basics 1, by K.S. Oh Feb. 1, 2001.

"Disconnect Switches in Photovoltaic Applications", ABB, Inc., Low Voltage Control Products & Systems, 1206 Hatton Road, Wichita Falls, TX 86302, Phone 888-385-1221, 940-397-7000, Fax: 940-397-7085, 1SXU301197130201, Nov. 2009.

Walker, "A DC Circuit Breaker for an Electric Vehicle Battery Pack", Australasian Universities Power Engineering Conference and IEAust Electric Energy Conference, Sep. 26-29, 1999.

Combined Search and Examination Report for GB1018872.0 dated Apr. 15, 2011, 2 pages.

International Search Report and Opinion of International Patent Application PCT/2009/051221, dated Oct. 19, 2009.

International Search Report and Opinion of International Patent Application PCT/2009/051222, dated Oct. 7, 2009.

Communication in EP07874025.5 dated Aug. 17, 2011.

IPRP for PCT/IB2008/055095 dated Jun. 8, 2010, with Written Opinion.

ISR for PCT/IB2008/055095 dated Apr. 30, 2009.

ISR for PCT/IL07/01064 dated Mar. 25, 2008.

IPRP for PCT/IB2007/004584 dated Jun. 10, 2009, with Written Opinion.

IPRP for PCT/IB2007/004591 dated Jul. 13, 2010, with Written Opinion.

IPRP for PCT/IB2007/004643 dated Jun. 10, 2009, with Written Opinion.

Written Opinion for PCT/IB2008/055092 submitted with IPRP dated Jun. 8, 2010.

IPRP for PCT/US2008/085754 dated Jun. 8, 2010, with Written Opinion dated Jan. 21, 2009.

IPRP for PCT/US2008/085755 dated Jun. 8, 2010, with Written Opinion dated Jan. 20, 2009.

IPRP for PCT/IB2009/051221 dated Sep. 28, 2010, with Written Opinion.

IPRP for PCT/IB2009/051222 dated Sep. 28, 2010, with Written Opinion.

IPRP for PCT/IB2009/051831 dated Nov. 9, 2010, with Written Opinion.

IPRP for PCT/US2008/085736 dated Jun. 7, 2011, with Written Opinion.

IPRP for PCT/IB2010/052287 dated Nov. 22, 2011, with Written Opinion.

ISR for PCT/I132010/052413 dated Sep. 7, 2010.

UK Intellectual Property Office, Application No. GB1109618.7, Patents Act 1977, Examination Report Under Section 18(3), dated Sep. 16, 2011.

UK Intellectual Property Office, Patents Act 1977: Patents Rules Notification of Grant: Patent Serial No. GB2480015, Nov. 29, 2011.

Walker, et al. "PV String Per-Module Maximum Power Point Enabling Converters", School of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering The University of Queensland, Sep. 28, 2003.

Walker, "Cascaded DC-DC Converter Connection of Photovoltaic Modules", 33rd Annual IEEE Power Electronics Specialists Conference. PESC 2002. Conference Proceedings. CAIRNS, Queensland, Australia, Jun. 23-27, 2002; [Annual Power Electronics Specialists Conference], New York, NY: IEEE US, vol. 1, Jun. 23, 2002, pp. 24-29, XP010596060 ISBN: 978-0-7803-7262-7, figure 1.

Baggio, "Quasi-ZVS Activity Auxiliary Commutation Circuit for Two Switches Forward Converter", 32nd Annual IEEE Power Electronics Specialists Conference. PESC 2001. Conference Pro-

(56)

References Cited

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

ceedings. Vancouver, Canada, Jun. 17-21, 2001; [Annual Power Electronics Specialists Conference] New York, NY: IEEE, US.

Ilic, "Interleaved Zero-Current-Transition Buck Converter", IEEE Transactions on Industry Applications, IEEE Service Center, Piscataway, NJ, US, vol. 43, No. 6, Nov. 1, 2007, pp. 1619-1627, XP011197477 ISSN: 0093-9994, pp. 1619-1922.

Lee: "Novel Zero-Voltage-Transition and Zero-Current-Transition Pulse-Width-Modulation Converters", Power Electronics Specialists Conference, 1997, PESC '97, Record, 28th Annual IEEE St. Louis, MO, USA, Jun. 22-27, 1997, New York, NY, USA IEEE, US, vol. 1, Jun. 22, 1997, pp. 233-239, XP010241553, ISBN: 978-0-7803-3840-1, pp. 233-236.

Sakamoto, "Switched Snubber for High-Frequency Switching Converters", Electronics & Communications in Japan, Part 1—Communications, Wiley, Hoboken, NJ, US, vol. 76, No. 2, Feb. 1, 1993, pp. 30-38, XP000403018 ISSN: 8756-6621, pp. 30-35.

Duarte, "A Family of ZVX-PWM Active-Clamping DC-to-DC Converters: Synthesis, Analysis and Experimentation", Telecommunications Energy Conference, 1995, INTELEC '95, 17th International The Hague, Netherlands, Oct. 29-Nov. 1, 1995, New York, NY, US, IEEE, US, Oct. 29, 1995, pp. 502-509, XP010161283 ISBN: 978-0-7803-2750-4 p. 503-504.

IPRP for PCT/IL2007/001064 dated Mar. 17, 2009, with Written Opinion dated Mar. 25, 2008.

IPRP for PCT/IB2007/004586 dated Jun. 10, 2009, with Written Opinion.

Gao, et al., "Parallel-Connected Solar PV System to Address Partial and Rapidly Fluctuating Shadow Conditions", IEEE Transactions on Industrial Electronics, vol. 56, No. 5, May 2009, pp. 1548-1556. IPRP PCT/IB2007/004610—date of issue Jun. 10, 2009.

Extended European Search Report—EP12176089.6—dated Nov. 8, 2012.

Gwon-Jong Yu et al: "Maximum power point tracking with temperature compensation of photovoltaic for air conditioning system with fuzzy controller", May 13, 1996; May 13, 1996-May 17, 1996, May 13, 1996 (May 13, 1996), pp. 1429-1432, XP010208423.

Extended European Search Report—EP12177067.1—dated Dec. 7, 2012.

GB Combined Search and Examination Report—GB1200423.0—dated Apr. 30, 2012.

GB Combined Search and Examination Report—GB1201499.9—dated May 28, 2012.

GB Combined Search and Examination Report—GB1201506.1—dated May 22, 2012.

"Study of Energy Storage Capacitor Reduction for Single Phase PWM Rectifier", Ruxi Wang et al., Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Feb. 2009.

"Multilevel Inverters: A Survey of Topologies, Controls, and Applications", José Rodriguez et al., IEEE Transactions on Industrial Electronics, vol. 49, No. 4, Aug. 2002.

Extended European Search Report—EP 08878650.4—dated Mar. 28, 2013.

Satcon Solstice—Satcon Solstice 100 kW System Solution Sheet—2010.

John Xue, "PV Module Series String Balancing Converters", University of Queensland—School of Information Technology & Electrical Engineering, Nov. 6, 2002.

U.S. Office Action—U.S. Appl. No. 13/785,857—dated Jun. 6, 2013.

European Office Action—EP Appl. 09725443.7—dated Aug. 18, 2015.

Test NPL _ Not Real.

Chinese Office Action—CN Appl. 201110349734.7—dated Oct. 13, 2015.

Chinese Office Action—CN Appl. 201210007491.3—dated Nov. 23, 2015.

European Office Action—EP Appl. 12176089.6—dated Dec. 16, 2015.

Chinese Office Action—CN Appl. 201310035223.7—dated Dec. 29, 2015.

Chinese Office Action—CN Application 201210334311.2—dated Jan. 20, 2016.

European Search Report—EP Appl. 13800859.4—dated Feb. 15, 2016.

Chinese Office Action—CN App. 201310035221.8—dated Mar. 1, 2016.

PCT/2008/058473 International Preliminary Report, 6 pages, dated Nov. 2, 2009.

International Search Report and Written Opinion, WO 2010080672, dated Aug. 19, 2010.

PCT/US2010/045352 International Search Report and Written Opinion; 12 pages; dated Oct. 26, 2010.

International Search Report and Written Opinion dated Feb. 6, 2009. In countepart PCT/US2008/008451, 13 pages.

European Search Report: dated Jan. 10, 2013 in corresponding EP application No. 09838022.3, 7 pages.

D. Ton and W. Bower; Summary Report of the DOE High-Tech Inverter Workshop; dated Jan. 2005

First Action Interview Pre-Interview Communication from U.S. Appl. No. 13/174,495 dated June 18, 2014, 7 pgs.

Johnson et al., "Arc-fault detector algorithm evaluation method utilizing prerecorded arcing signatures", Photovoltaic Specialists Conference (PVSC), Jun. 2012.

Philippe Welter, et al. "Electricity at 32 kHz," Photon International, The Photovoltaic Magazine, <http://www.photon-magazine.com/archiv/articles.aspx?criteria=4&HeftNr=0807&Title=Elec...> printed May 27, 2011).

PCT/US2009/069582 Int. Search Report—dated Aug. 19, 2010.

Chinese Office Action—CN Appl. 201210007491.3—dated Apr. 25, 2016.

CN Office Action—CN Appl. 201310004123.8—dated May 5, 2016.

Law et al, "Design and Analysis of Switched-Capacitor-Based Step-Up Resonant Converters," IEEE Transactions on Circuits and Systems, vol. 52, No. 5, published May 2005.

CN Office Action—CN Appl. 201310066888.4—dated May 30, 2016.

European Search Report—EP Appl. 13152966.1—dated Jul. 21, 2016.

European Search Report—EP Appl. 12183811.4—dated Aug. 4, 2016.

European Notice of Opposition—EP Patent 2374190—dated Jul. 19, 2016.

"ES werde Dunkelheit. Freischaltung von Solarmodulen im Brandfall"—"Let there be Darkness: Quality control of Solar Modules in Case of Fire"; PHOTON, May 2005, 75-77, ISSN 1430-5348, English translation provided.

Chinese Office Action—CN Appl. 201380029450.7—dated Jul. 28, 2016.

Chinese Office Action—CN Appl. 201310035221.8—dated Aug. 11, 2016.

Zhou, Wilson and Theo Phillips—"Industry's First 4-Switch Buck-Boost Controller Achieves Highest Efficiency Using a Single Inductor—Design Note 369"—Linear Technology Corporation—www.linear.com—2005.

"Micropower Synchronous Buck-Boost DC/DC Converter"—Linear Technology Corporation—www.linear.com/LTC3440-2001. Caricchi, F. et al—20 kW Water-Cooled Prototype of a Buck-Boost Bidirectional DC-DC Converter Topology for Electrical Vehicle Motor Drives—University of Rome—IEEE 1995—pp. 887-892.

Roy, Arunanshu et al—"Battery Charger using Bicycle"—EE318 Electronic Design Lab Project Report, EE Dept, IIT Bombay, Apr. 2006.

Jun. 20-25, 2004—Viswanathan, K. et al—Dual-Mode Control of Cascade Buck-Boost PFC Converter—35th Annual IEEE Power Electronics Specialists Conference—Aachen, Germany, 2004.

Zhang, Pei et al.—"Hardware Design Experiences in ZebraNet"—Department of Electrical Engineering, Princeton University—SenSys '04, Nov. 3-5, 2004.

"High Efficiency, Synchronous, 4-Switch Buck-Boost Controller"—Linear Technology Corporation—www.linear.com/LTC3780-2005.

(56)

References Cited

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- Chomsuwan, Komkrit et al. "Photovoltaic Grid-Connected Inverter Using Two-Switch Buck-Boost Converter"—Department of Electrical Engineering, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand, National Science and Technology Development Agency, Thailand—IEEE—2002.
- Midya, Pallab et al.—"Buck or Boost Tracking Power Converter"—IEEE Power Electronics Letters, vol. 2, No. 4—Dec. 2004.
- Chinese Office Action—CN Appl. 201510111948.9—dated Sep. 14, 2016.
- Chinese Office Action—CN Appl. 201310066888.4—dated Nov. 2, 2016.
- "Power-Switching Converters—the Principle, Simulation and Design of the Switching Power (the Second Edition)", Ang, Oliva, et al., translated by Xu Dehong, et al., China Machine Press, Aug. 2010, earlier publication 2005.
- European Notice of Opposition—EP Patent 2092625—dated Nov. 29, 2016.
- Mar. 8, 2003—Vishay Siliconix "Si 7884DP-n-Channel 40-V (D-S) MOSFET" (2003).
- Chinese Office Action—CN 201510423458.2—dated Jan. 3, 2017 (english translation provided).
- Chinese Office Action—CN 201410098154.9—dated Mar. 3, 2017 (english translation provided).
- European Search Report—EP Appl. 13150911.9—Apr. 7, 2017.
- Chinese Office Action and Search Report—CN 201510578586.4—dated Apr. 19, 2017.
- Jul. 7, 2017—European Search Report—EP 17158978.1.
- Howard et al., "Relaxation on a Mesh: a Formalism for Generalized Localization." Proceedings of the IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS 2001). Wailea, Hawaii, Oct. 2001.
- Ciobotaru, et al., Control of single-stage single-phase PV inverter, Aug. 7, 2006.
- International Search Report and Written Opinion for PCT/IB2007/004591 dated Jul. 5, 2010.
- European Communication for EP07873361.5 dated Jul. 12, 2010.
- European Communication for EP07874022.2 dated Oct. 18, 2010.
- European Communication for EP07875148.4 dated Oct. 18, 2010.
- Chen, et al., "A New Low-Stress Buck-Boost Converter for Universal-Input PFC Applications", IEEE Applied Power Electronics Conference, Feb. 2001, Colorado Power Electronics Center Publications.
- Chen, et al., "Buck-Boost PWM Converters Having Two Independently Controlled Switches", IEEE Power Electronics Specialists Conference, Jun. 2001, Colorado Power Electronics Center Publications.
- Esrām, et al., "Comparison of Photovoltaic Array Maximum Power Point Tracking Techniques", IEEE Transactions on Energy Conversion, vol. 22, No. 2, Jun. 2007, pp. 439-449.
- Walker, et al., "Photovoltaic DC-DC Module Integrated Converter for Novel Cascaded and Bypass Grid Connection Topologies-Design and Optimisation", 37th IEEE Power Electronics Specialists Conference, Jun. 18-22, 2006, Jeju, Korea.
- Geoffrey R. Walker Affidavit re: U.S. Appl. No. 11/950,307, submitted in an IDS for U.S. Appl. No. 11/950,271 on Mar. 9, 2010.
- Geoffrey R. Walker Affidavit re: U.S. Appl. No. 11/950,271, submitted in an IDS for U.S. Appl. No. 11/950,271 on Mar. 9, 2010.
- International Search Report for PCT/IB2007/004610 dated Feb. 23, 2009.
- International Search Report for PCT/IB2007/004584 dated Jan. 28, 2009.
- International Search Report for PCT/IB2007/004586 dated Mar. 5, 2009.
- International Search Report for PCT/IB2007/004643 dated Jan. 30, 2009.
- International Search Report for PCT/US2008/085736 dated Jan. 28, 2009.
- International Search Report for PCT/US2008/085754 dated Feb. 9, 2009.
- International Search Report for PCT/US2008/085755 dated Feb. 3, 2009.
- Kajihara, et al., "Model of Photovoltaic Cell Circuits Under Partial Shading", 2005 IEEE, pp. 866-870.
- Knaupp, et al., "Operation of a 10 KW PV Façade with 100 W AC Photovoltaic Modules", 1996 IEEE, 25th PVSC, May 13-17, 1996, pp. 1235-1238, Washington, DC.
- Alonso, et al., "Cascaded H-Bridge Multilevel Converter for Grid Connected Photovoltaic Generators with Independent Maximum Power Point Tracking of Each Solar Array", 2003 IEEE 34th, Annual Power Electronics Specialists Conference, Acapulco, Mexico, Jun. 15-19, 2003, pp. 731-735, vol. 2.
- Myrzik, et al., "String and Module Integrated Inverters for Single-Phase Grid Connected Photovoltaic Systems—A Review", Power Tech Conference Proceedings, 2003 IEEE Bologna, Jun. 23-26, 2003, p. 8, vol. 2.
- Chen, et al., "Predictive Digital Current Programmed Control", IEEE Transactions on Power Electronics, vol. 18, Issue 1, Jan. 2003.
- Wallace, et al., "DSP Controlled Buck/Boost Power Factor Correction for Telephony Rectifiers", Telecommunications Energy Conference 2001, INTELEC 2001, Twenty-Third International, Oct. 18, 2001, pp. 132-138.
- Alonso, "A New Distributed Converter Interface for PV Panels", 20th European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference, Jun. 6-10, 2005, Barcelona, Spain, pp. 2288-2291.
- Alonso, "Experimental Results of Intelligent PV Module for Grid-Connected PV Systems", 21st European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference, Sep. 4-8, 2006, Dresden, Germany, pp. 2297-2300.
- Enslin, "Integrated Photovoltaic Maximum Power Point Tracking Converter", IEEE Transactions on Industrial Electronics, vol. 44, No. 6, Dec. 1997, pp. 769-773.
- Sep. 7-9, 1999—Lindgren, "Topology for Decentralised Solar Energy Inverters with a Low Voltage AC-Bus", Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Electrical Power Engineering, EPE '99—Lausanne.
- Nikraz, "Digital Control of a Voltage Source Inverter in a Photovoltaic Applications", 2004 35th Annual IEEE Power Electronics Specialists Conference, Aachen, Germany, 2004, pp. 3266-3271.
- Orduz, "Evaluation Test Results of a New Distributed MPPT Converter", 22nd European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference, Sep. 3-7, 2007, Milan, Italy.
- Palma, "A Modular Fuel Cell, Modular DC-DC Converter Concept for High Performance and Enhanced Reliability", IEEE 2007, pp. 2633-2638.
- Sep. 16-19, 1996—Quaschnig, "Cost Effectiveness of Shadow Tolerant Photovoltaic Systems", Berlin University of Technology, Institute of Electrical Energy Technology, Renewable Energy Section. EuroSun '96, pp. 819-824.
- Roman, "Intelligent PV Module for Grid-Connected PV Systems", IEEE Transactions on Industrial Electronics, vol. 52, No. 4, Aug. 2006, pp. 1066-1073.
- Roman, "Power Line Communications in Modular PV Systems", 20th European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference, Jun. 6-10, 2005, Barcelona, Spain, pp. 2249-2252.
- Uriarte, "Energy Integrated Management System for PV Applications", 20th European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference, Jun. 6-10, 2005, Barcelona, Spain, pp. 2292-2295.
- Walker, "Cascaded DC-DC Converter Connection of Photovoltaic Modules", IEEE Transactions on Power Electronics, vol. 19, No. 4, Jul. 2004, pp. 1130-1139.
- Oct. 3-7, 1999—Matsui, et al., "A New Maximum Photovoltaic Power Tracking Control Scheme Based on Power Equilibrium at DC Link", IEEE, 1999, pp. 804-809.
- Hou, et al., Application of Adaptive Algorithm of Solar Cell Battery Charger, Apr. 2004.
- Stamenic, et al., "Maximum Power Point Tracking for Building Integrated Photovoltaic Ventilation Systems", 2000.
- International Preliminary Report on Patentability for PCT/IB2008/055092 dated Jun. 8, 2010.
- International Search Report for PCT/IB2008/055092 dated Sep. 8, 2009.

(56)

References Cited

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- International Search Report and Opinion of International Patent Application WO2009136358 (PCT/IB2009/051831), dated Sep. 16, 2009.
- Informal Comments to the International Search Report dated Dec. 3, 2009.
- PCT/IB2010/052287 International Search Report and Written Opinion dated Sep. 2, 2010.
- UK Intellectual Property office, Combined Search and Examination Report for GB1100450.4 under Sections 17 and 18 (3), dated Jul. 14, 2011.
- Jain, et al., "A Single-Stage Grid Connected Inverter Topology for Solar PV Systems with Maximum Power Point Tracking", IEEE Transactions on Power Electronics, vol. 22, No. 5, Sep. 2007, pp. 1928-1940.
- Lynch, et al., "Flexible DER Utility Interface System: Final Report", Sep. 2004-May 2006, Northern Power Systems, Inc., Waitsfield, Vermont B. Kroposki, et al., National Renewable Energy Laboratory Golden, Colorado Technical Report NREL/TP-560-39876, Aug. 2006.
- Schimpf, et al., "Grid Connected Converters for Photovoltaic, State of the Art, Ideas for improvement of Transformerless Inverters", NORPIE/2008, Nordic Workshop on Power and Industrial Electronics, Jun. 9-11, 2008.
- Sandia Report SAND96-2797 I UC-1290 Unlimited Release, Printed Dec. 1996, "Photovoltaic Power Systems and The National Electrical Code: Suggested Practices", by John Wiles, Southwest Technology Development Institute New Mexico State University Las Cruces, NM.
- Robert W. Erickson, "Future of Power Electronics for Photovoltaics", IEEE Applied Power Electronics Conference, Feb. 2009.
- GB Combined Search and Examination Report—GB1203763.6—dated Jun. 25, 2012.
- Mohammad Reza Amini et al., "Quasi Resonant DC Link Inverter with a Simple Auxiliary Circuit", Journal of Power Electronics, vol. 11, No. 1, Jan. 2011.
- Khairy Fathy et al., "A Novel Quasi-Resonant Snubber-Assisted ZCS-PWM DC-DC Converter with High Frequency Link", Journal of Power Electronics, vol. 7, No. 2, Apr. 2007.
- Cheng K.W.E., "New Generation of Switched Capacitor Converters", Department of Electrical Engineering, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hung Horn, Hong Kong, Power Electronics Conference, 1998, PESC 98.
- 1999—Per Karlsson, "Quasi Resonant DC Link Converters—Analysis and Design for a Battery Charger Application", Universitetstryckeriet, Lund University, 1999, ISBN 91-88934-14-4; Added to Lund University Publications on Jun. 4, 2012.
- Hsiao Sung-Hsin et al., "ZCS Switched-Capacitor Bidirectional Converters with Secondary Output Power Amplifier for Biomedical Applications", Power Electronics Conference (IPEC) Jun. 21, 2010.
- Yuang-Shung Lee et al., "A Novel QR ZCS Switched-Capacitor Bidirectional Converter", IEEE, 2007.
- Antti Tolvanen et al., "Seminar on Solar Simulation Standards and Measurement Principles", May 9, 2006 Hawaii.
- J.A. Eikelboom and M.J. Jansen, "Characterisation of PV Modules of New Generations—Results of tests and simulations", Jun. 2000.
- Yeong-Chau Kuo et al., "Novel Maximum-Power-Point-Tracking Controller for Photovoltaic Energy Conversion System", IEEE Transactions on Industrial Electronics, vol. 48, No. 3, Jun. 2001.
- C. Liu et al., "Advanced Algorithm for MPPT Control of Photovoltaic Systems", Canadian Solar Buildings Conference, Montreal, Aug. 20-24, 2004.
- Chihchiang Hua and Chihming Shen, "Study of Maximum Power Tracking Techniques and Control of DC/DC Converters for Photovoltaic Power System", IEEE 1998.
- Tore Skjellnes et al., "Load sharing for parallel inverters without communication", Nordic Workshop in Power and Industrial Electronics, Aug. 12-14, 2002.
- Giorgio Spiazzi et al., "A New Family of Zero-Current-Switching Variable Frequency dc-dc Converters", IEEE 2000.
- Nayar, C.V., M. Ashari and W.W.L Keerthiphala, "A Grid Interactive Photovoltaic Uninterruptible Power Supply System Using Battery Storage and a Back up Diesel Generator", IEEE Transactions on Energy Conversion, vol. 15, No. 3, Sep. 2000, pp. 348-353.
- Ph. Strauss et al., "AC coupled PV Hybrid systems and Micro Grids-state of the art and future trends", 3rd World Conference on Photovoltaic Energy Conversion, Osaka, Japan May 11-18, 2003.
- Nayar, C.V., abstract, Power Engineering Society Summer Meeting, 2000. IEEE, 2000, pp. 1280-1282 vol. 2.
- D. C. Martins et al., "Analysis of Utility Interactive Photovoltaic Generation System using a Single Power Static Inverter", Asian J. Energy Environ., vol. 5, Issue 2, (2004), pp. 115-137.
- Rafael C. Beltrame et al., "Decentralized Multi String PV System With Integrated ZVT Cell", Congresso Brasileiro de Automática / 12 a Sep. 16, 2010, Bonito-MS.
- Sergio Busquets-Monge et al., "Multilevel Diode-clamped Converter for Photovoltaic Generators With Independent Voltage Control of Each Solar Array", IEEE Transactions on Industrial Electronics, vol. 55, No. 7, Jul. 2008.
- Soeren Baekhoej Kjaer et al., "A Review of Single-Phase Grid-Connected Inverters for Photovoltaic Modules", IEEE Transactions on Industry Applications, vol. 41, No. 5, Sep./Oct. 2005.
- Office Action—JP 2011-539491—dated Mar. 26, 2013.
- Supplementary European Search Report—EP08857456—dated Dec. 6, 2013.
- Extended European Search Report—EP14151651.8—dated Feb. 25, 2014.
- Iyomori H et al: "Three-phase bridge power block module type auxiliary resonant AC link snubber-assisted soft switching inverter for distributed AC power supply", INTELEC 2003. 25th. International Telecommunications Energy Conference. Yokohama, Japan, Oct. 19-23, 2003; Tokyo, IEICE, JP, Oct. 23, 2003 (Oct. 23, 2003), pp. 650-656, XP031895550, ISBN: 978-4-88552-196-6.
- Yuqing Tang: "High Power Inverter EMI characterization and Improvement Using Auxiliary Resonant Snubber Inverter", Dec. 17, 1998 (Dec. 17, 1998), XP055055241, Blacksburg, Virginia Retrieved from the Internet: URL: <http://ijscholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-012299-165108/unrestricted/THESIS.PDF>, [retrieved on Mar. 5, 2013].
- Yoshida M et al: "Actual efficiency and electromagnetic noises evaluations of a single inductor resonant AC link snubber-assisted three-phase soft-switching inverter", INTELEC 2003. 25th. International Telecommunications Energy Conference. Yokohama, Japan, Oct. 19-23, 2003; Tokyo, IEICE, JP, Oct. 23, 2003 (Oct. 23, 2003), pp. 721-726, XP031895560, ISBN: 978-4-88552-196-6.
- Third party observation—EP07874025.5—dated Aug. 6, 2011.
- Extended European Search Report—EP 13152967.9—dated Aug. 28, 2014.
- Extended European Search Report—EP 14159696—dated Jun. 20, 2014.
- Gow Ja A et al: "A Modular DC-DC Converter and Maximum Power Tracking Controller for Medium to Large Scale Photovoltaic Generating Plant" 8th European Conference on Power Electronics and Applications. Lausaane, CH, Sep. 7-9, 1999, EPE. European Conference on Power Electronics and Applications, Brussels: EPE Association, BE, vol. Conf. 8, Sep. 7, 1999, pp. 1-8, XP000883026.
- Matsuo H et al: "Novel Solar Cell Power Supply System Using the Multiple-input DC-DC Converter" 20th International telecommunications Energy Conference. Intelec '98 San Francisco, CA, Oct. 4-8, 1998, Intelec International Telecommunications Energy Conference, New York, NY: IEEE, US, Oct. 4, 1998, pp. 797-802, XP000896384.
- European Patent Application No. 08845104.2, Extended Search Report, dated Jul. 31, 2014.
- European Patent Application No. 11772811.3, Extended Search Report, dated Dec. 15, 2014.
- European Search Report—EP App. 14159457.2—dated Jun. 12, 2015.
- European Search Report and Written Opinion—EP Appl. 12150819.6—dated Jul. 6, 2015.
- Alonso, O. et al. "Cascaded H-Bridge Multilevel Converter for Grid Connected Photovoltaic Generators With Independent Maximum

(56)

References Cited

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Power Point Tracking of Each Solar Array.” IEEE 34th Annual Power Electronics Specialists Conference. vol. 2, Jun. 15, 2003.

Chinese Office Action—CN Appl. 201280006369.2—dated Aug. 4, 2015.

Chinese Office Action—CN Appl. 201210253614.1—dated Aug. 18, 2015.

Extended European Search Report, EP Application 04753488.8, dated Apr. 29, 2015.

International Search Report from PCT/US04/16668, form PCT/ISA/220, filing date May 27, 2004.

Office Action U.S. Appl. No. 13/785,857, dated Jun. 6, 2013.

Partial Extended European Search Report, EP Application 04753488.8, dated Feb. 2, 2015.

The International Search Report (Form PCT /ISA/220) Issued in corresponding international application No. PCT/US04/16668, filed May 27, 2004.

International Search Report—PCT/US2004/016668, form PCT/ISA/220—filed May 27, 2004—dated Jan. 19, 2005.

Written Opinion of the International Searching Authority—PCT/US2004/016668, form PCT/ISA/220—filing date May 27, 2004—dated Jan. 19, 2005.

Extended European Search Report—EP Appl. 04753488.8—dated Apr. 29, 2015.

Supplementary Partial European Search Report—EP Appl. 04753488.8—dated Feb. 2, 2015.

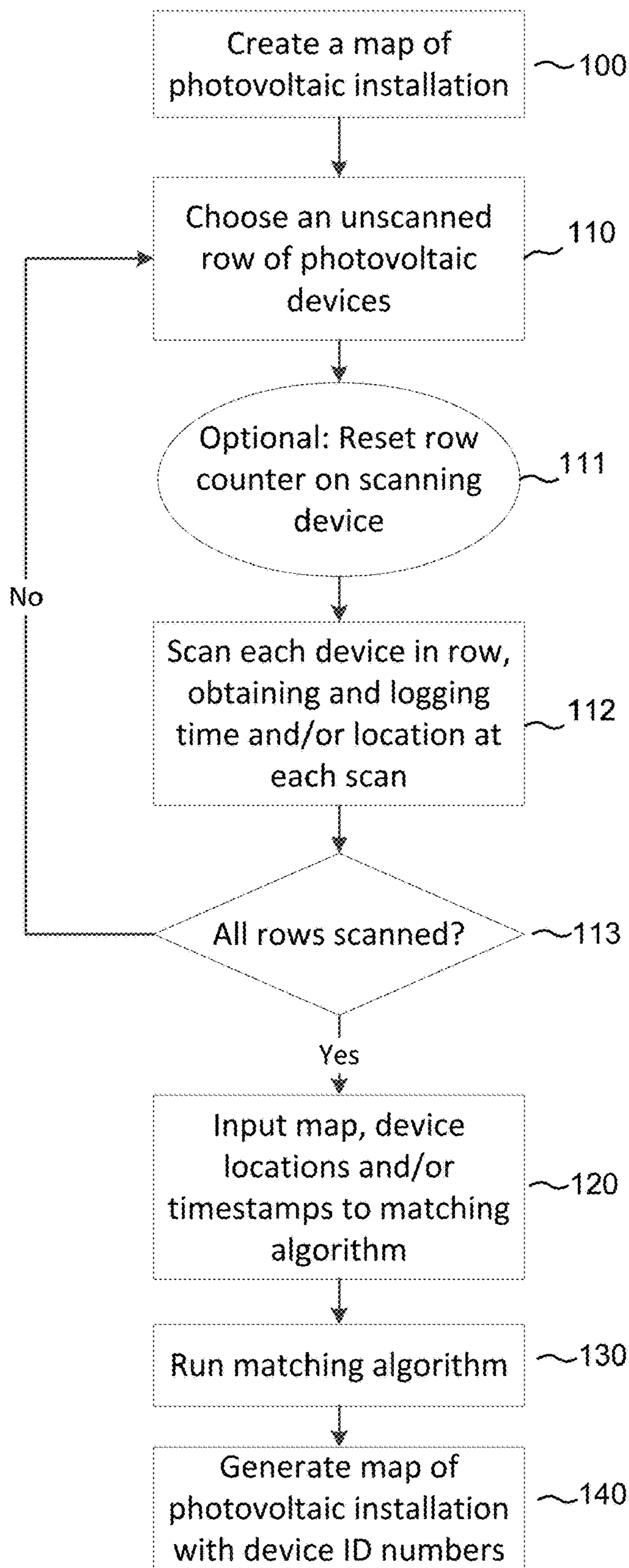


Fig. 1

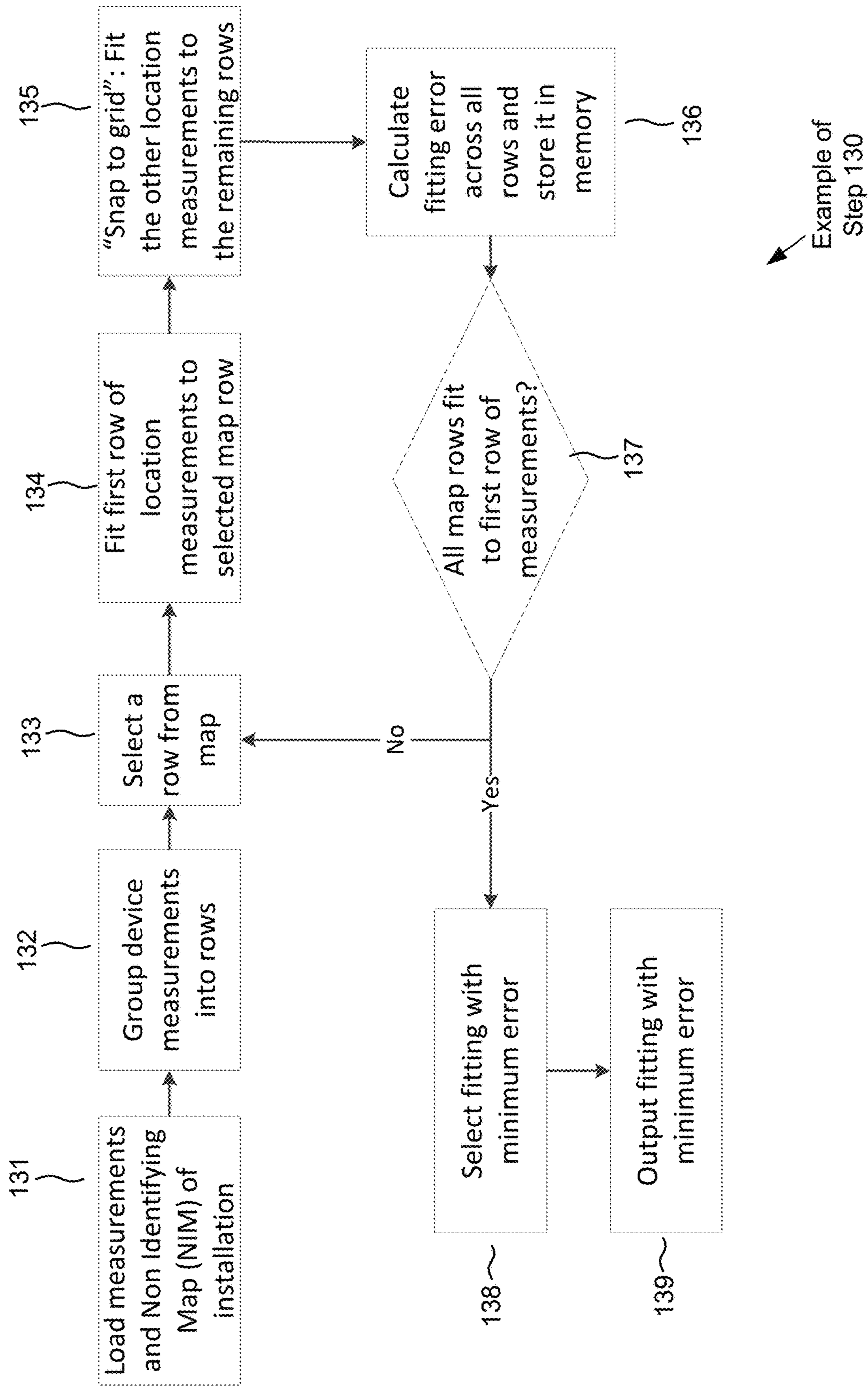


Fig. 2A

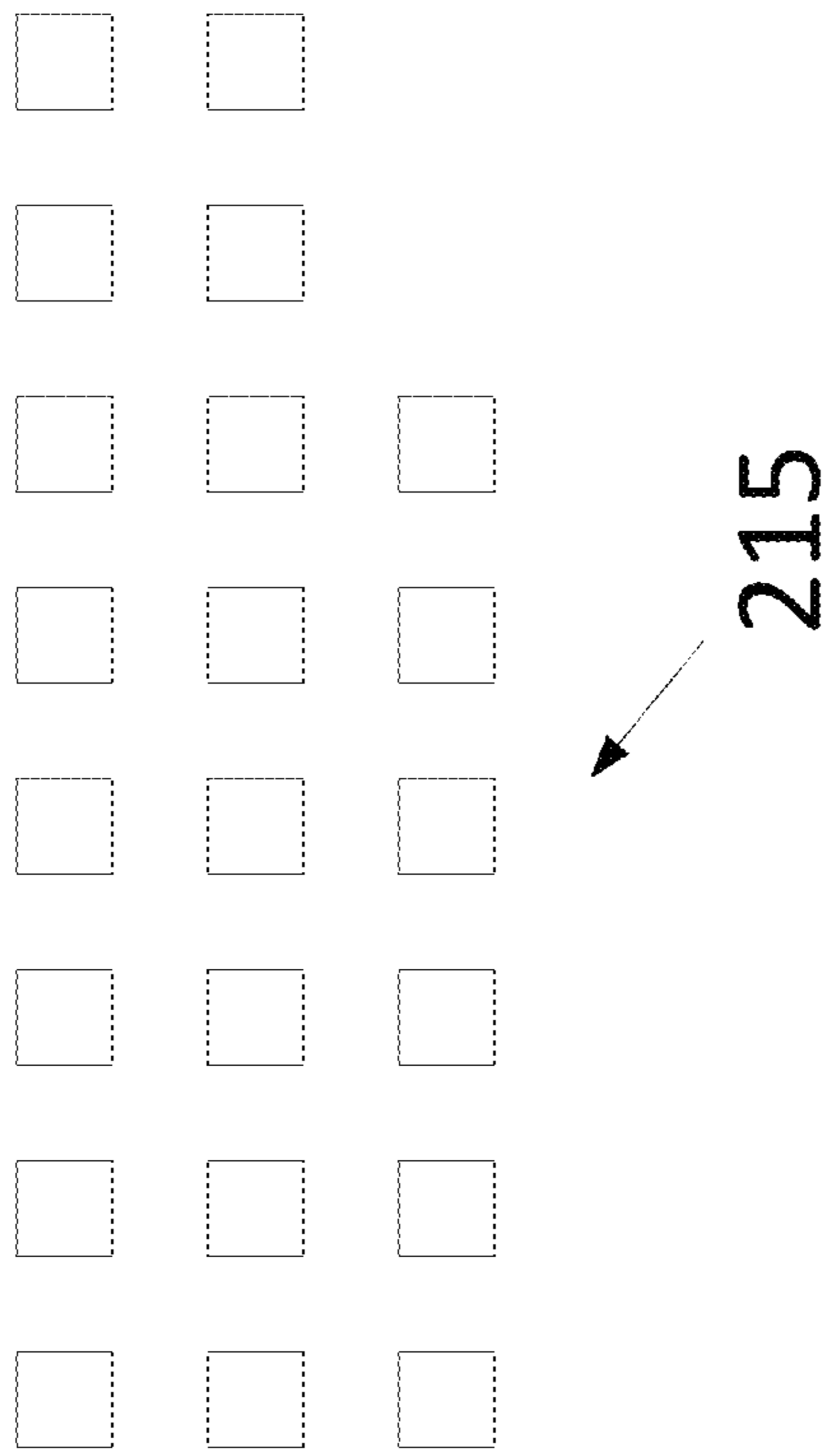


Fig. 2B

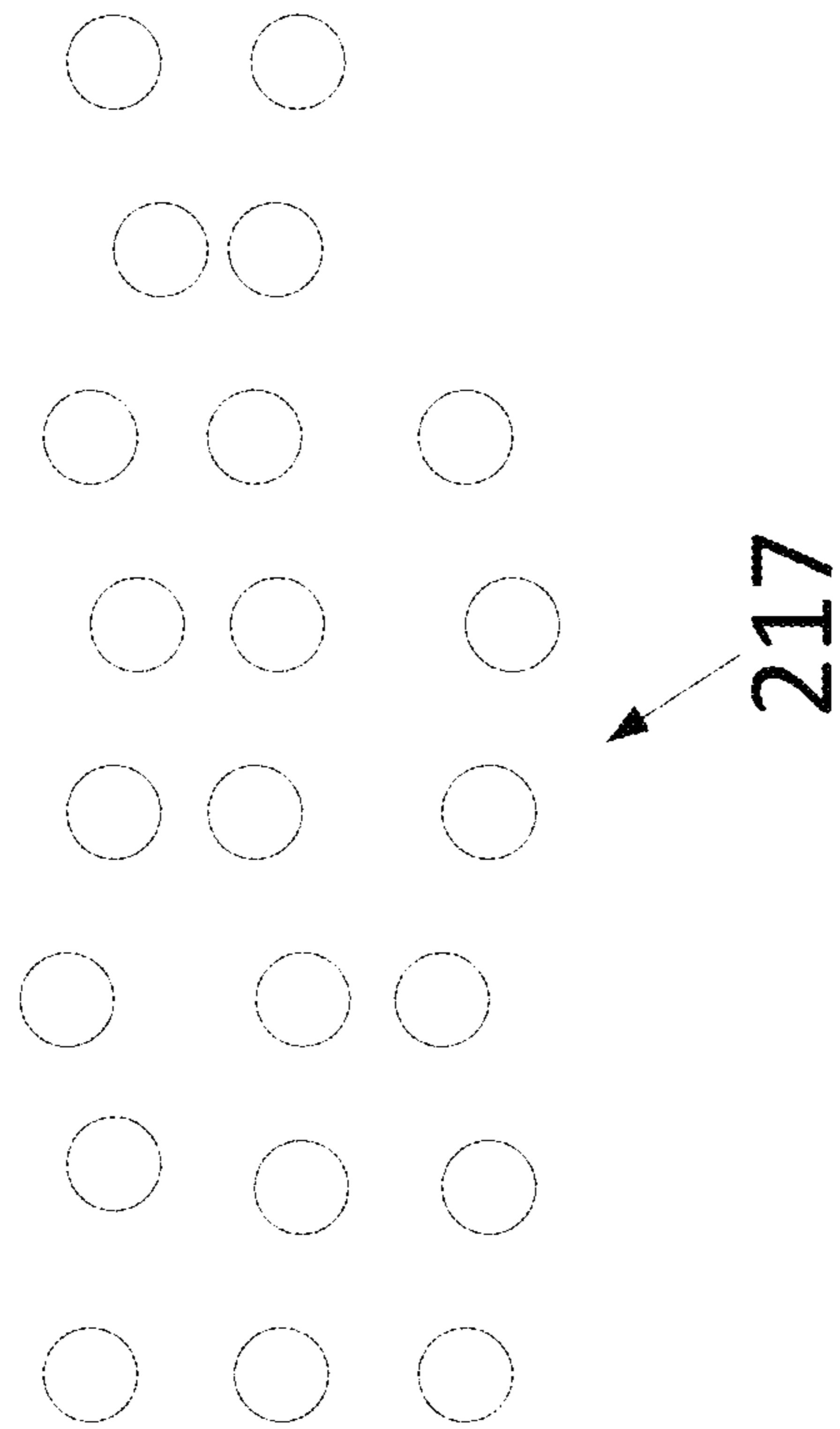
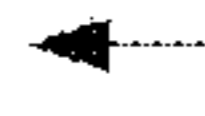
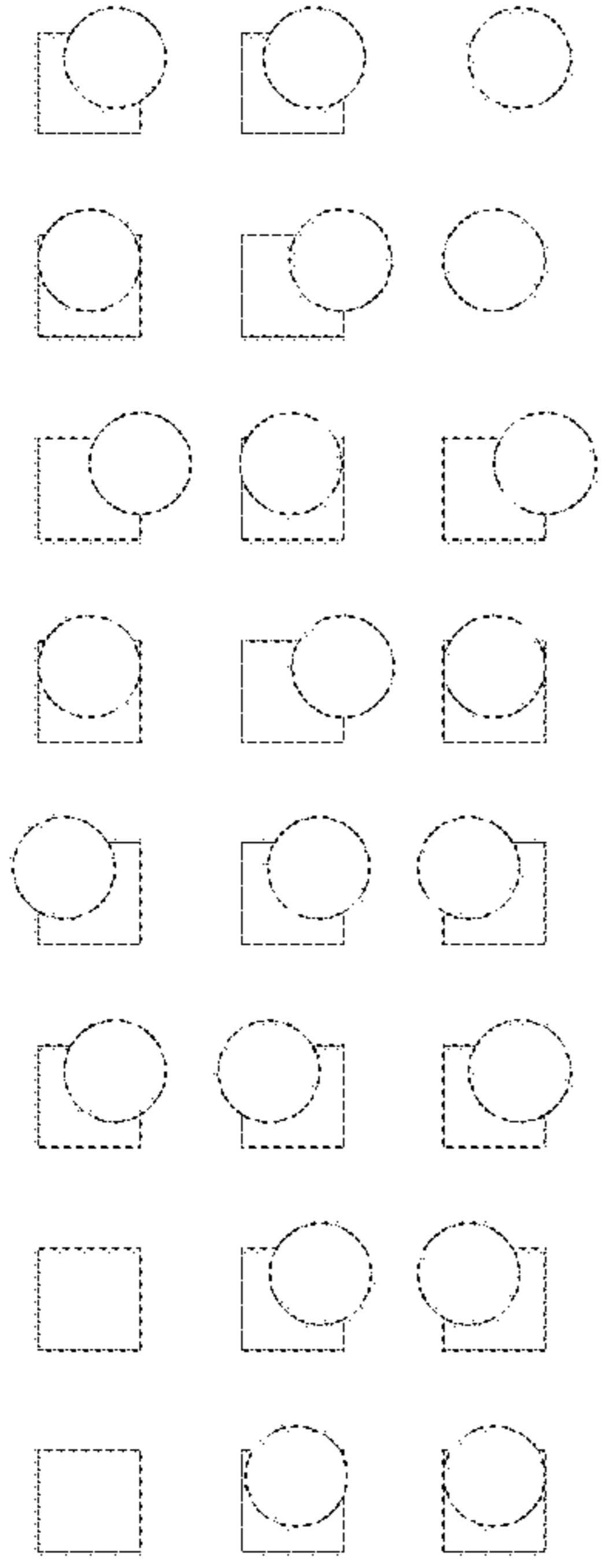
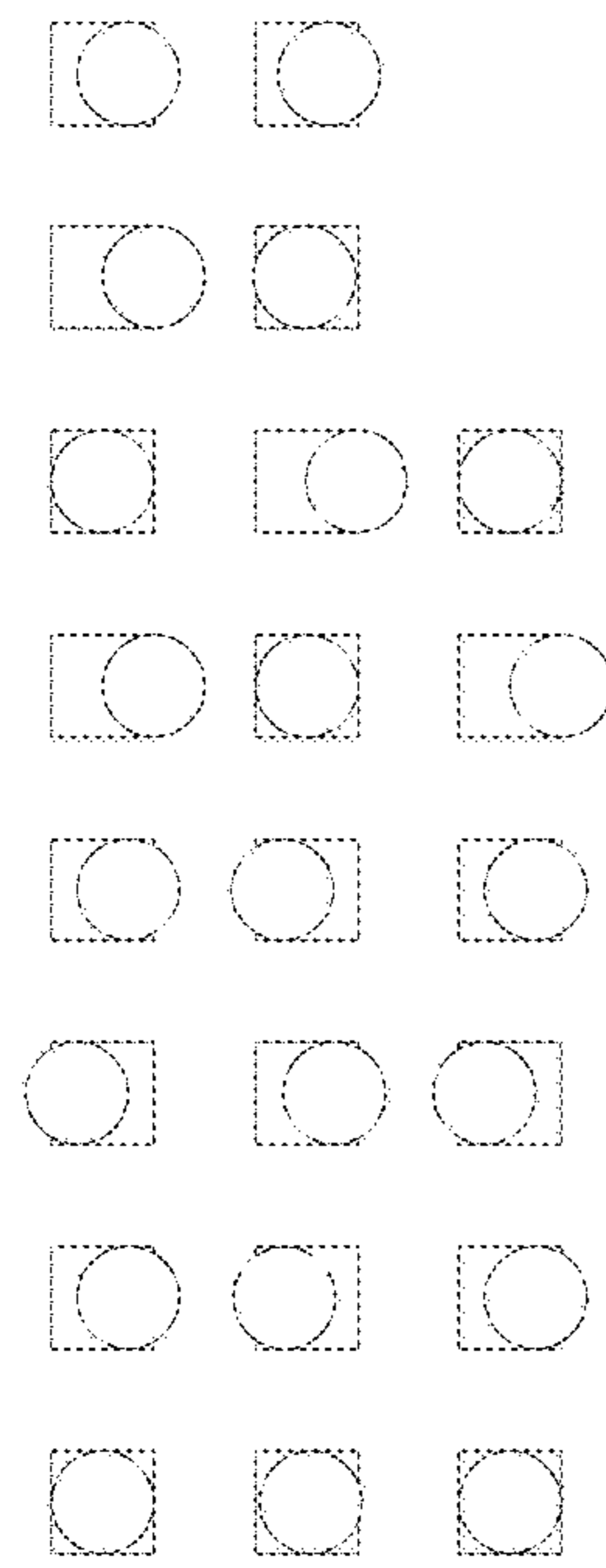


Fig. 2C

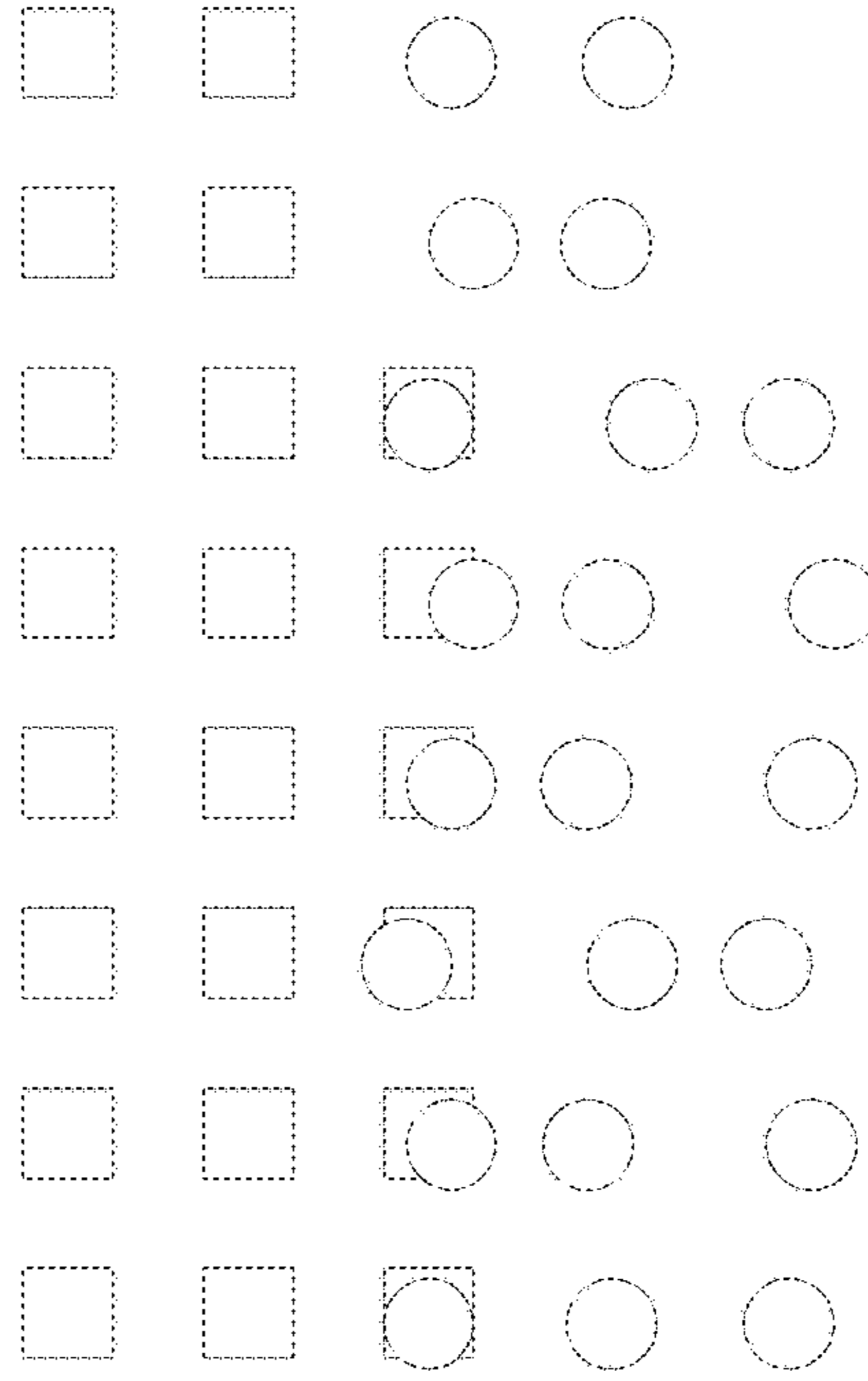


Fitting C

Fitting first measured row to third NIM row



Fitting A: Fitting first measured row to first NIM row



Fitting B: Fitting first measured row to second NIM row

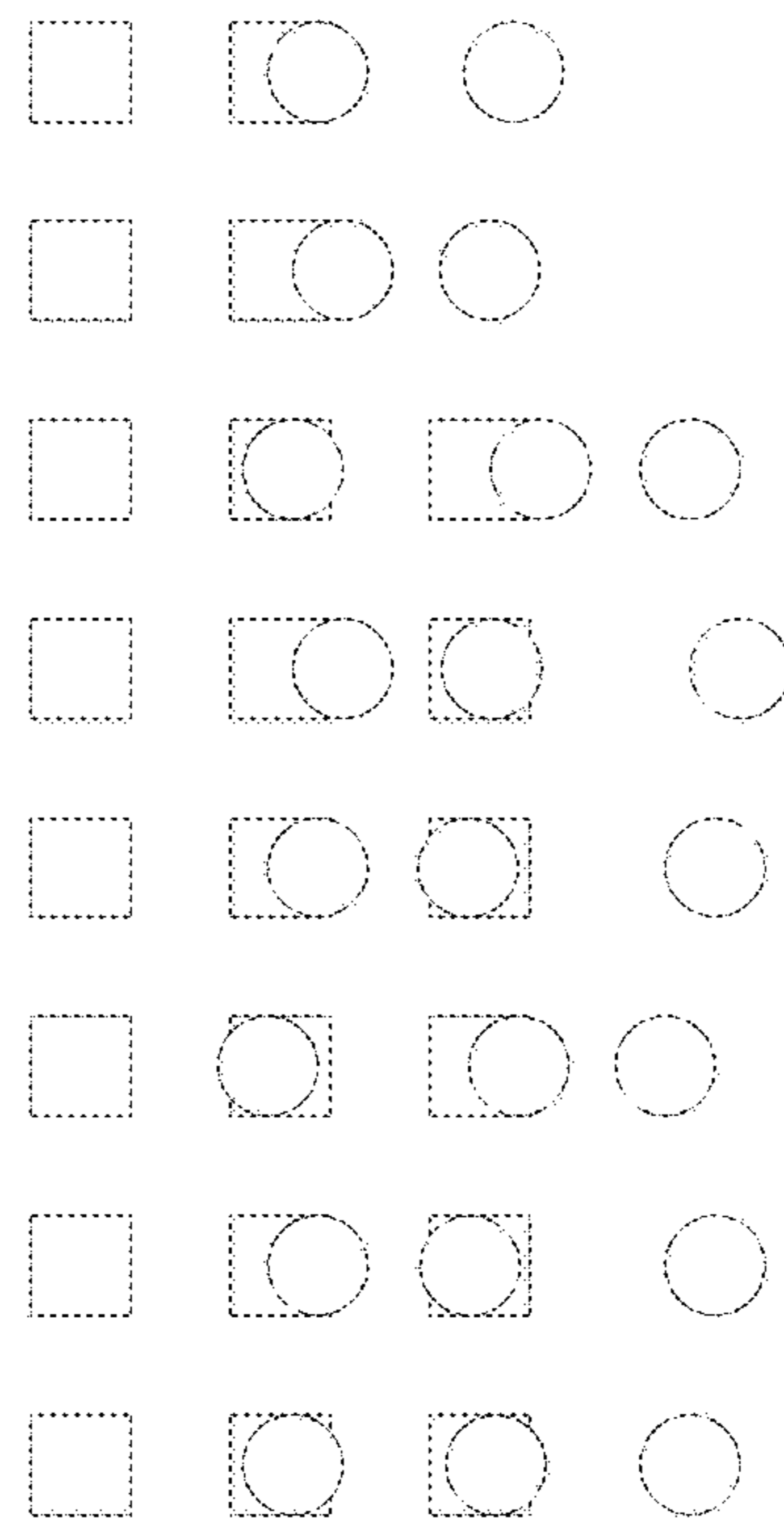


Fig. 2D

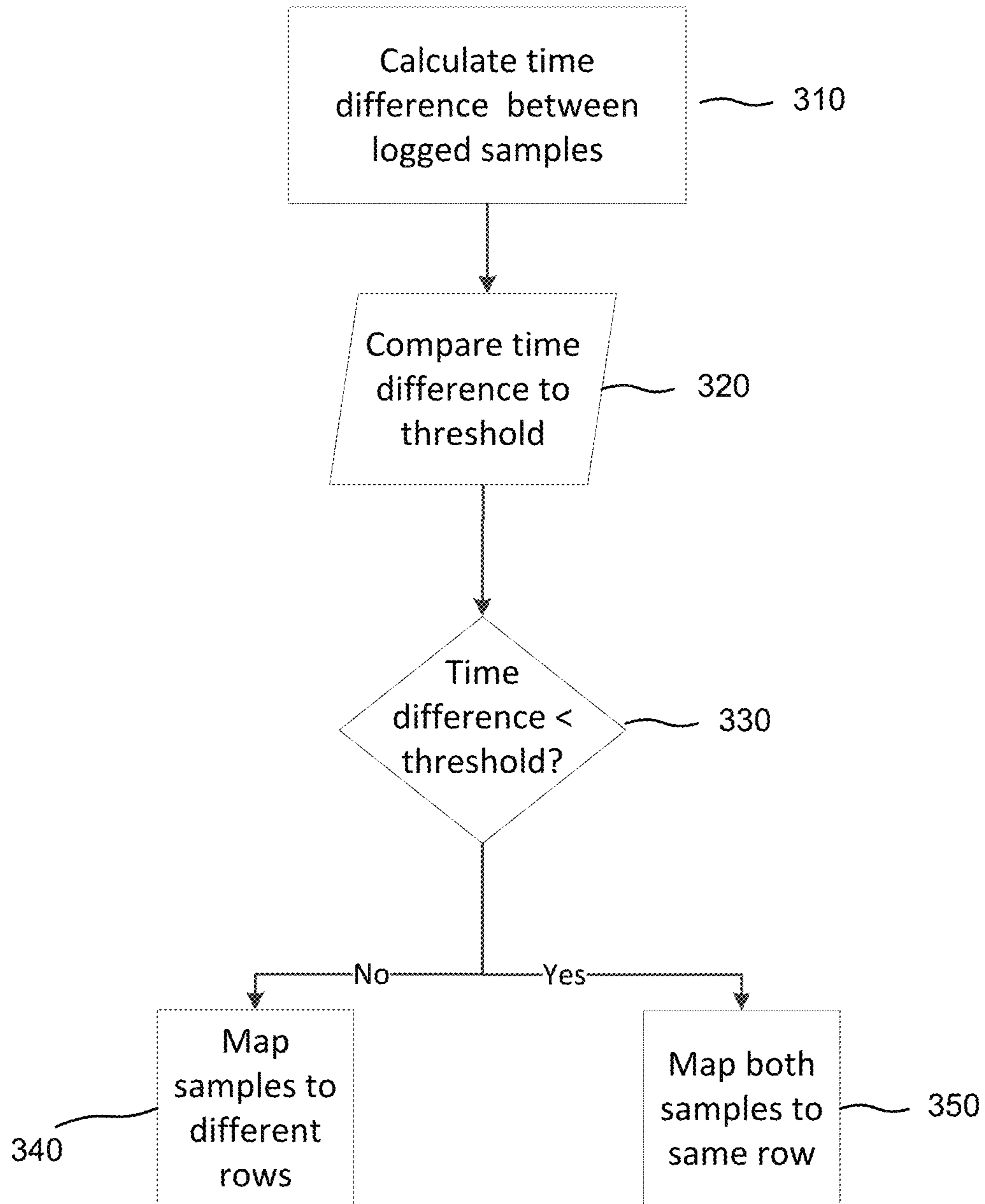


Fig. 3A

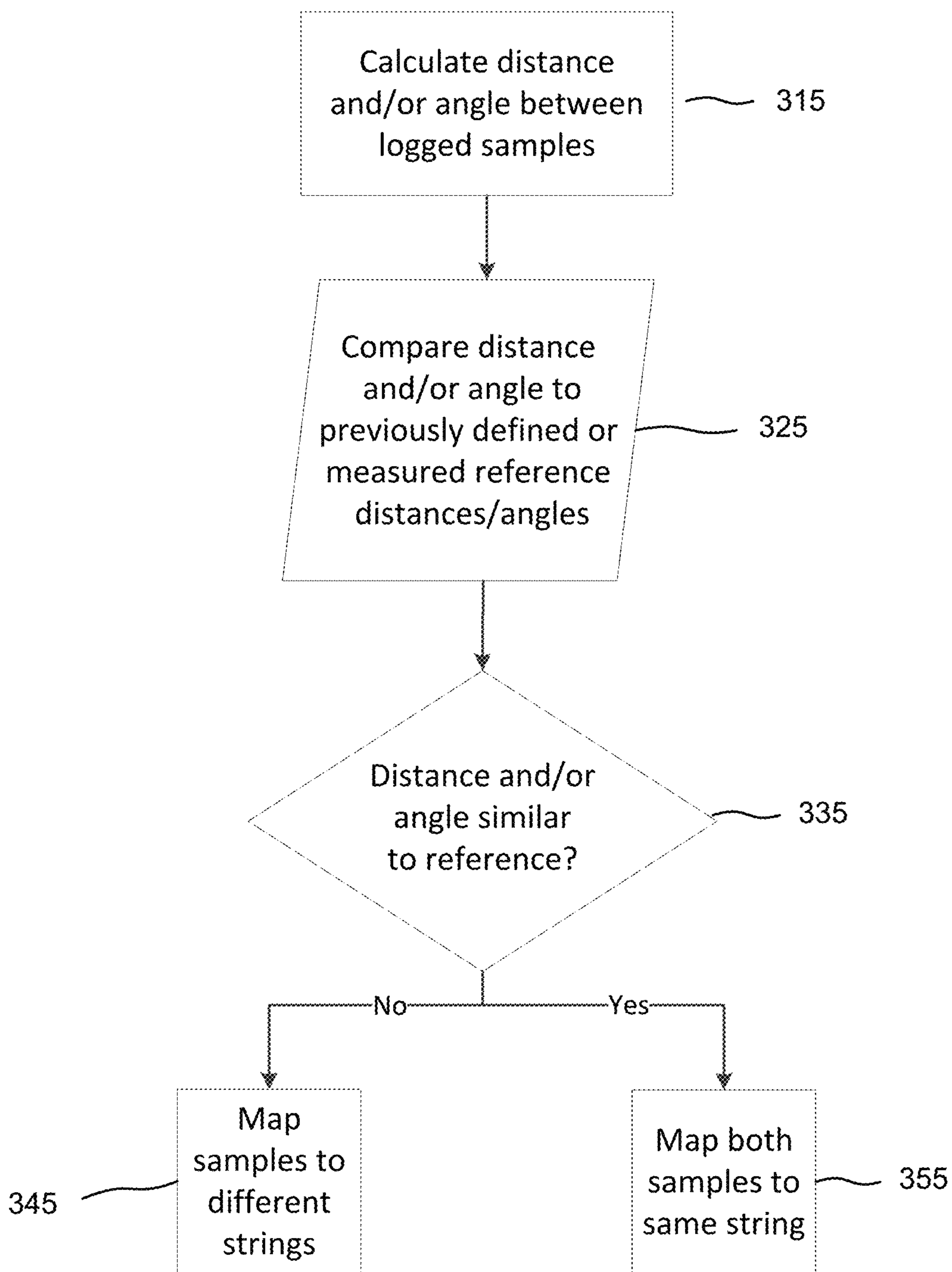


Fig. 3B

physical_map.txt

Row 1: 20 devices, 1 meter apart
Distance between row 1 and row 2: 4m
Row 2: 20 devices, 1 meter apart
Distance between row 2 and row 3: 4m
Row 2: 30 devices, 1 meter apart
Distance between row 2 and row 3: 8m



Example of
step 100

Fig. 4

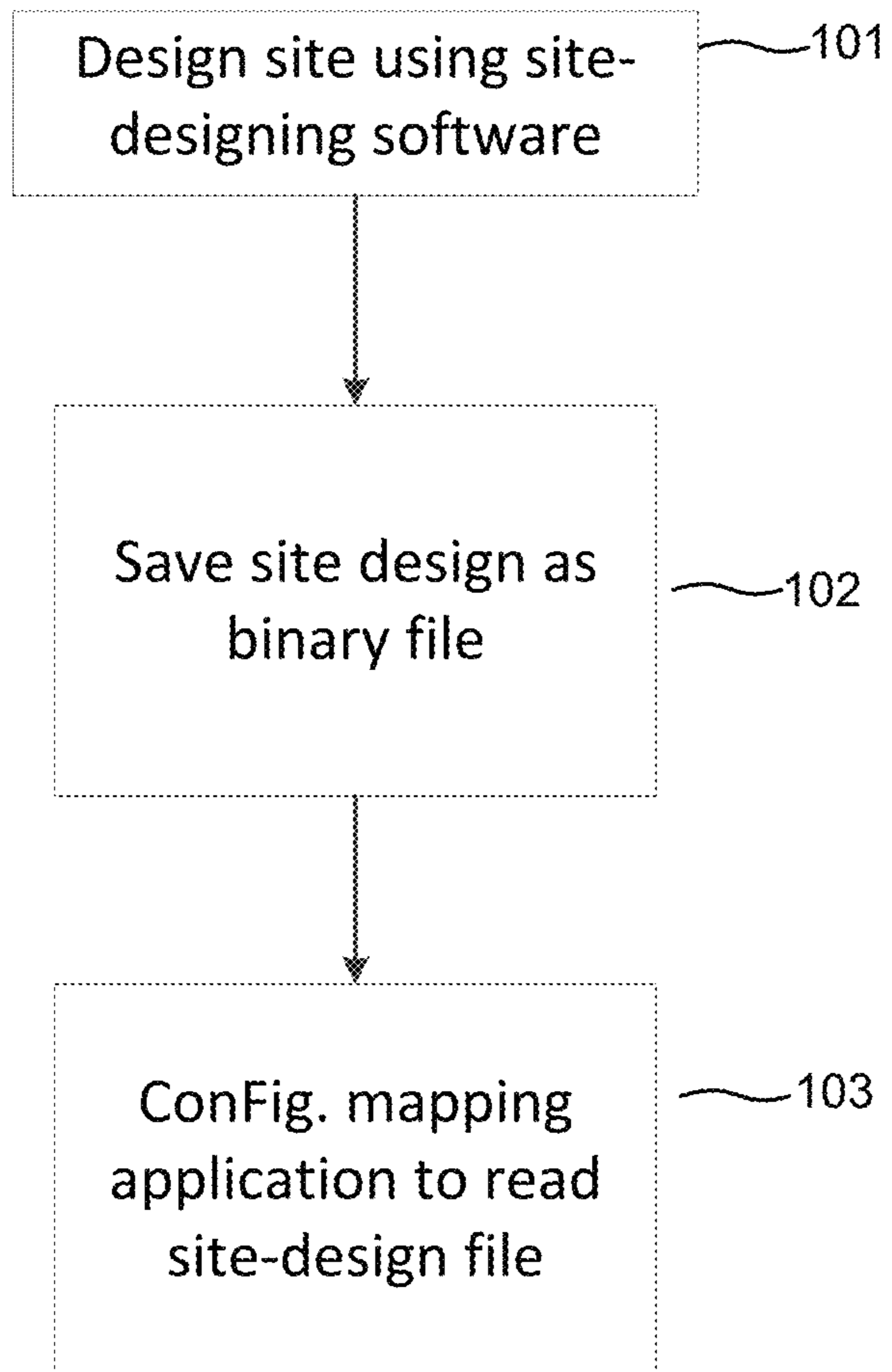


Fig. 5A

Example
of step
100

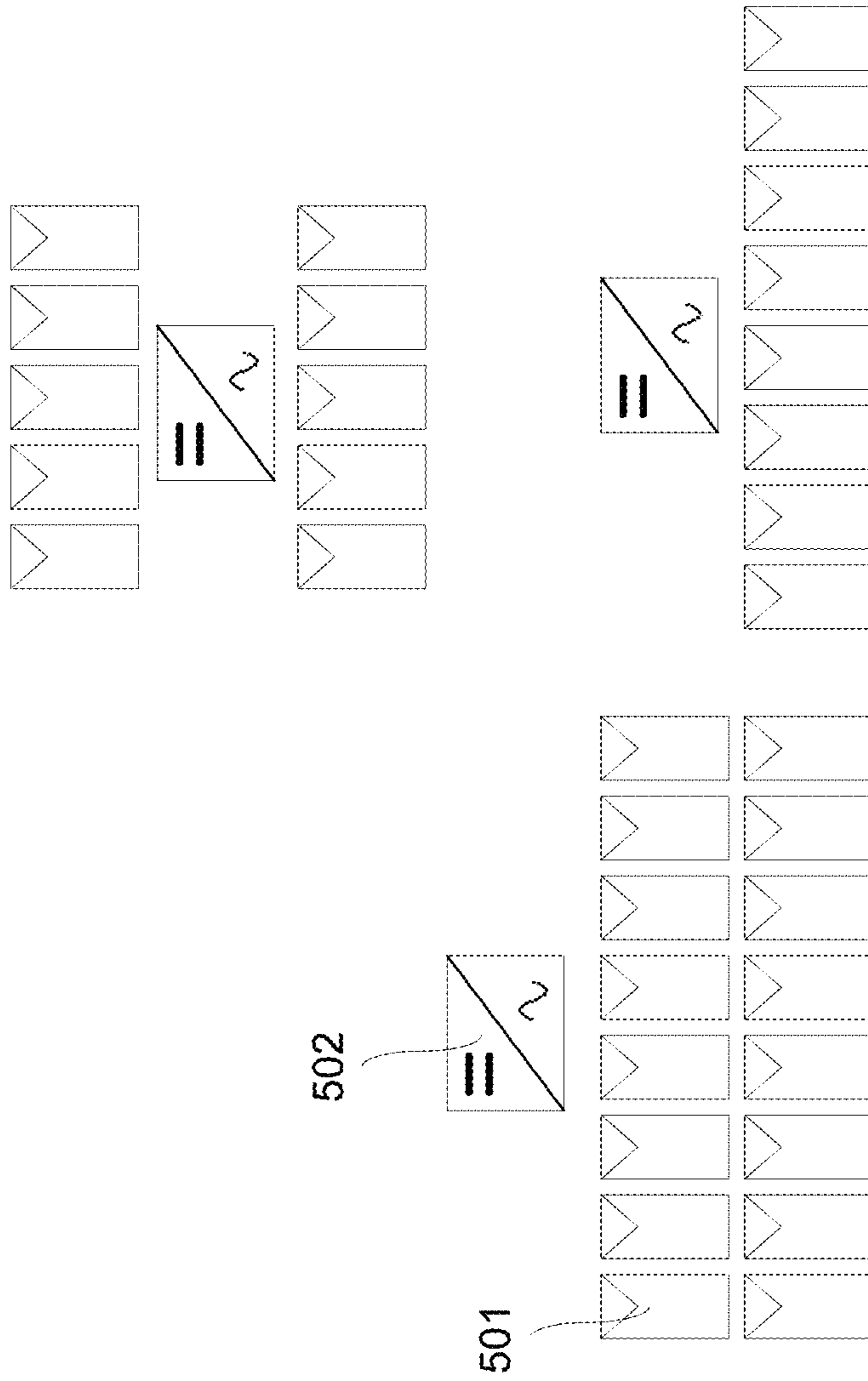
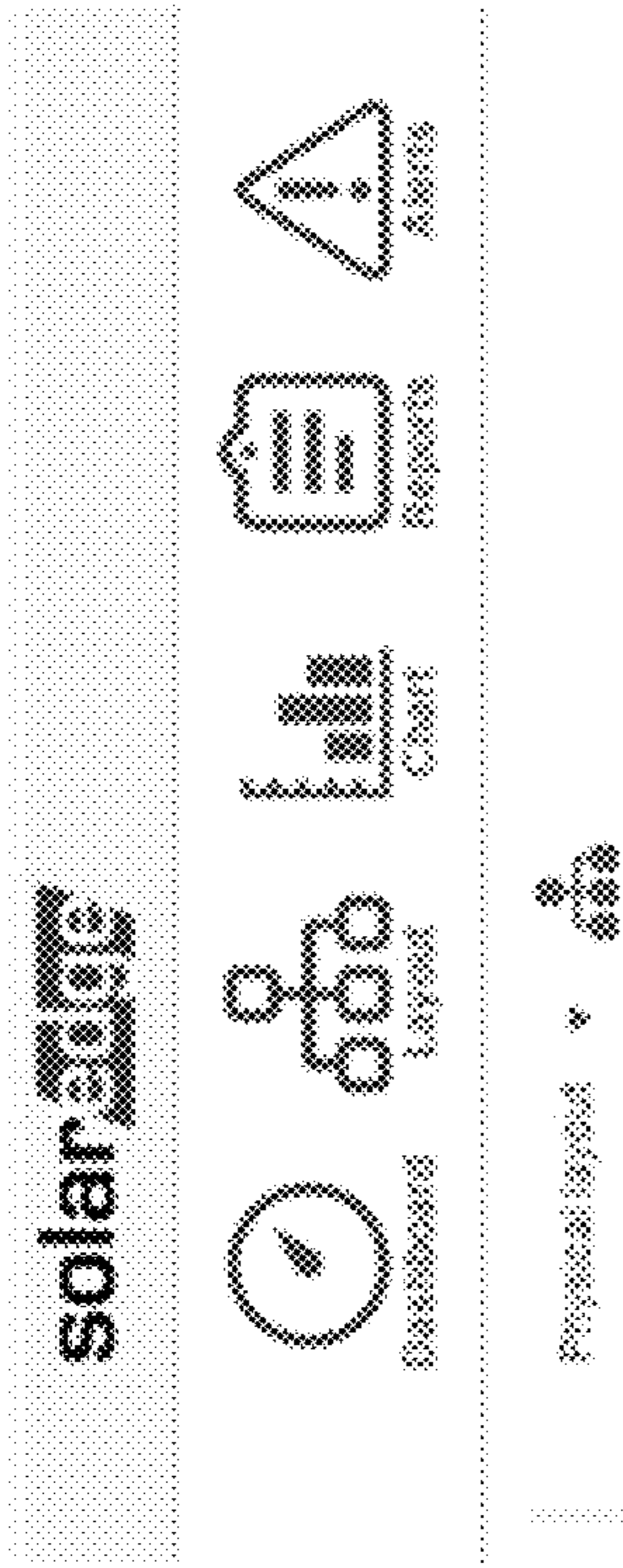


Fig. 5B

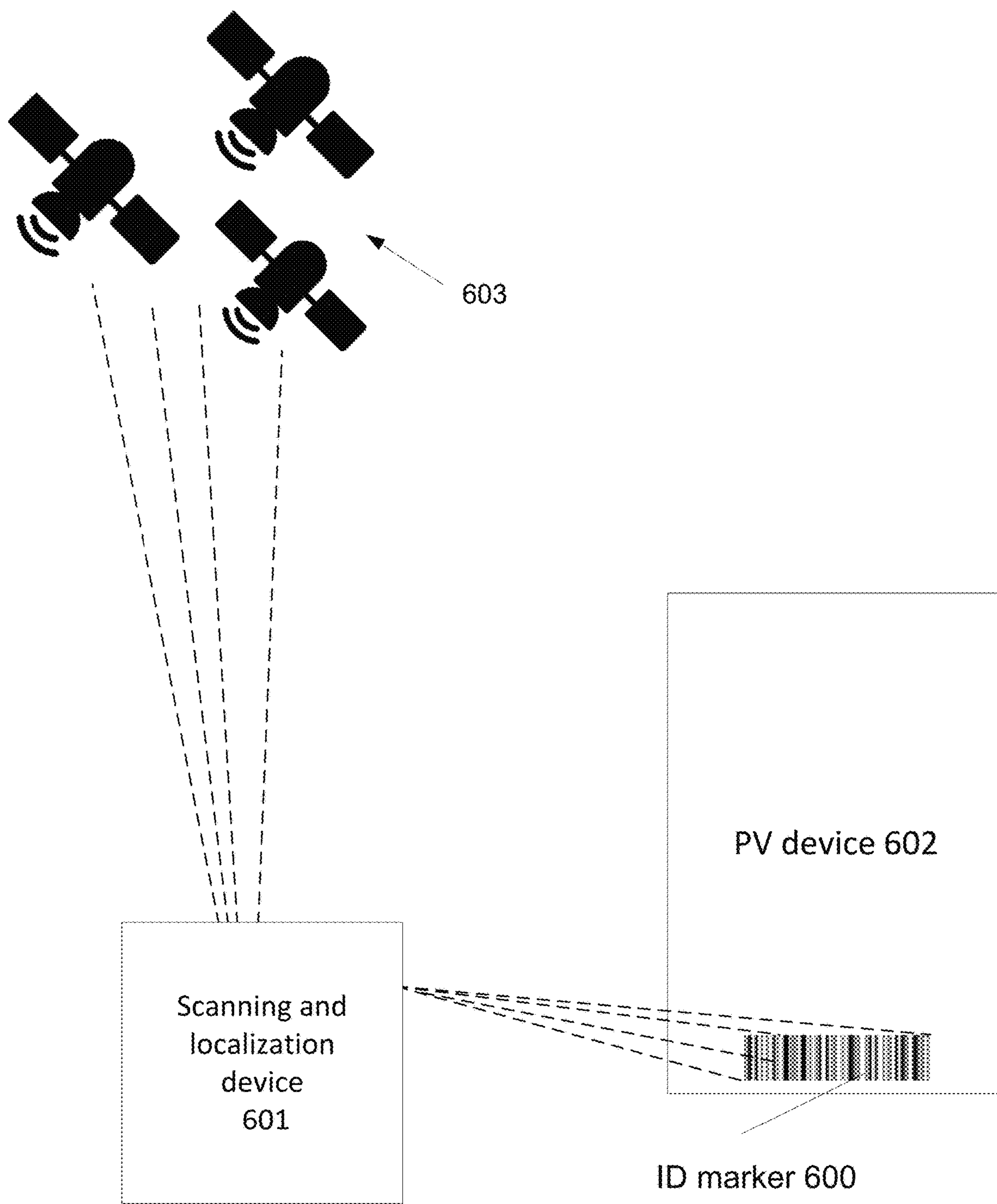


Fig. 6

Example of
step 112

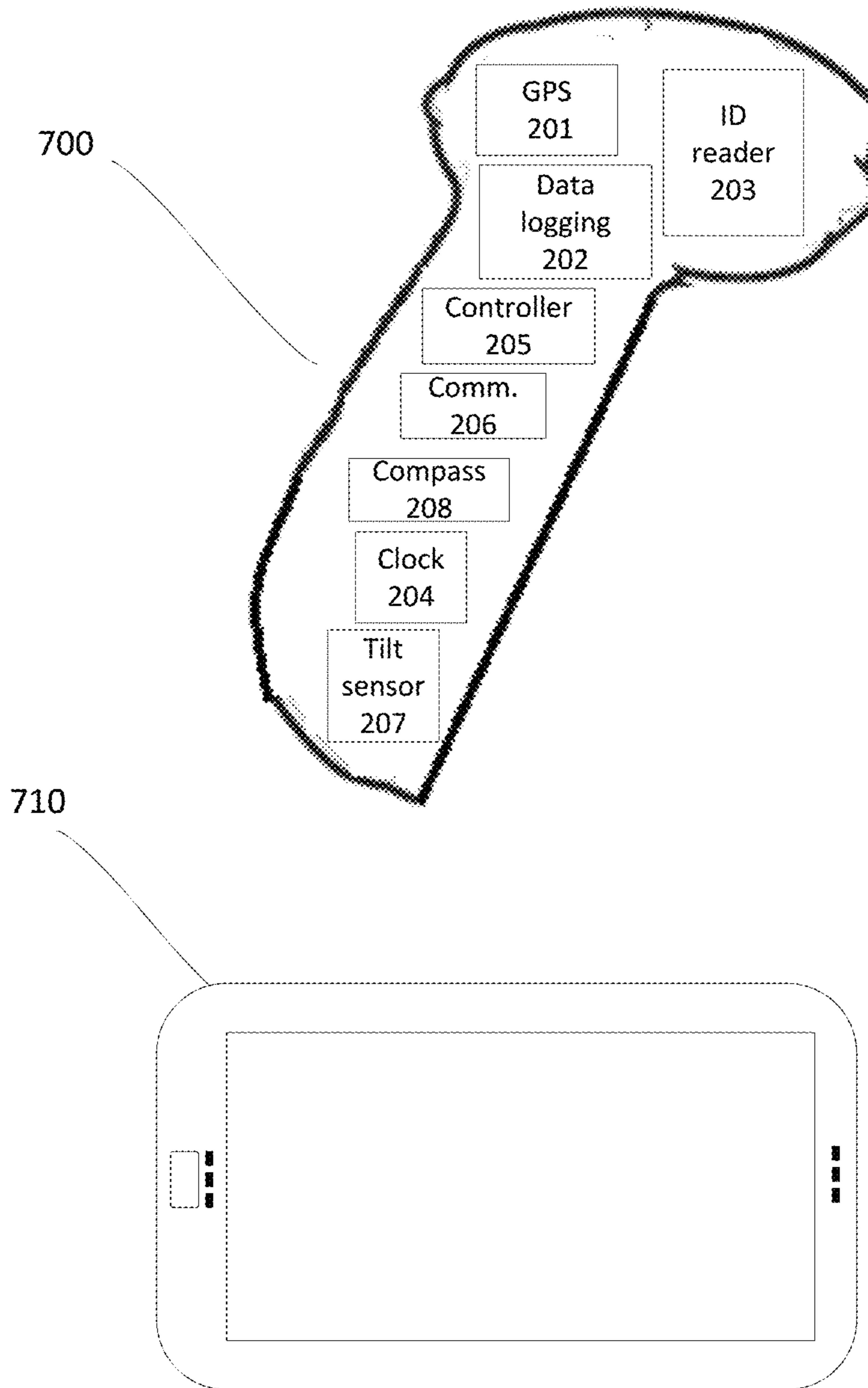


Fig. 7

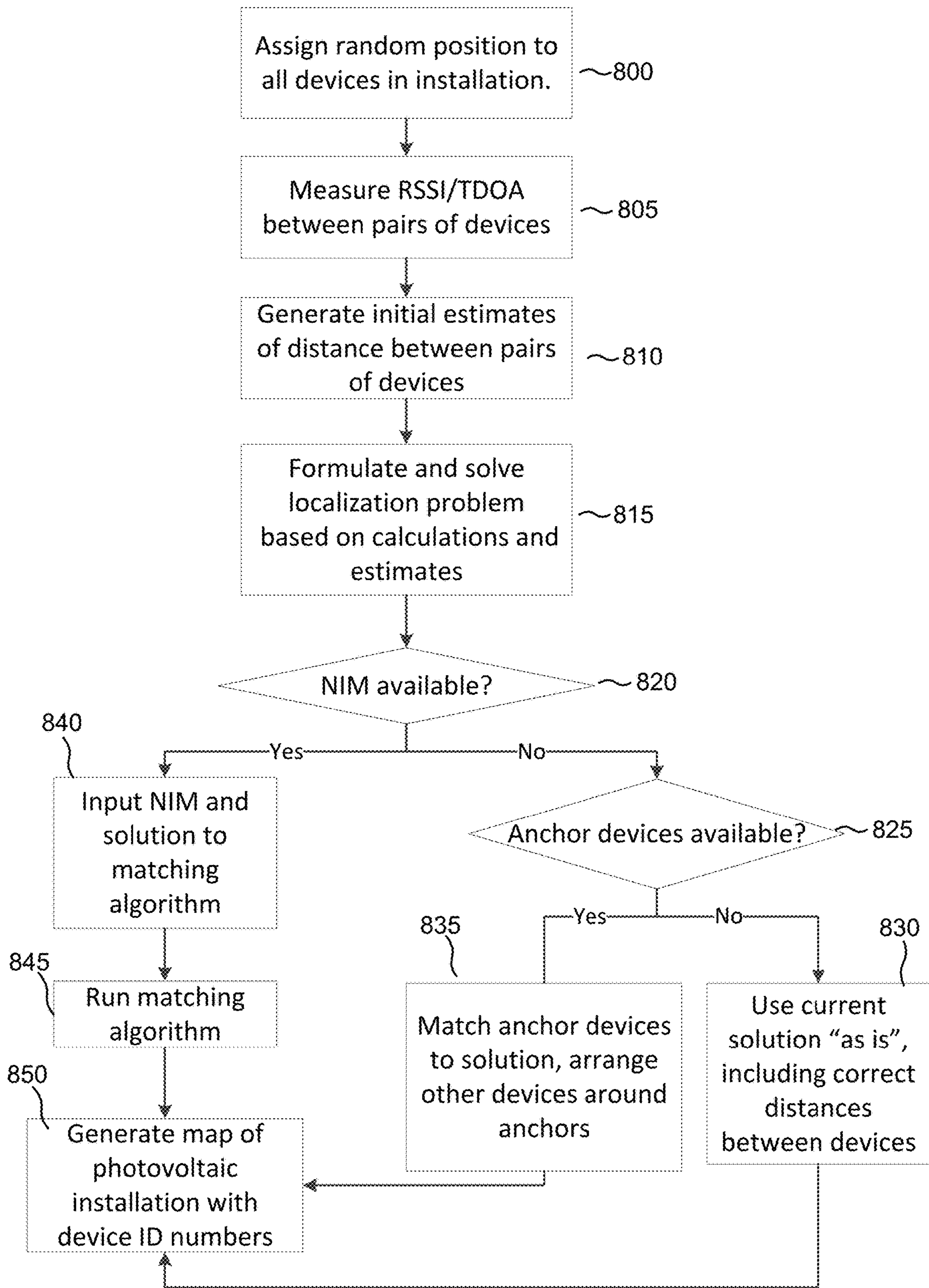


Fig. 8A

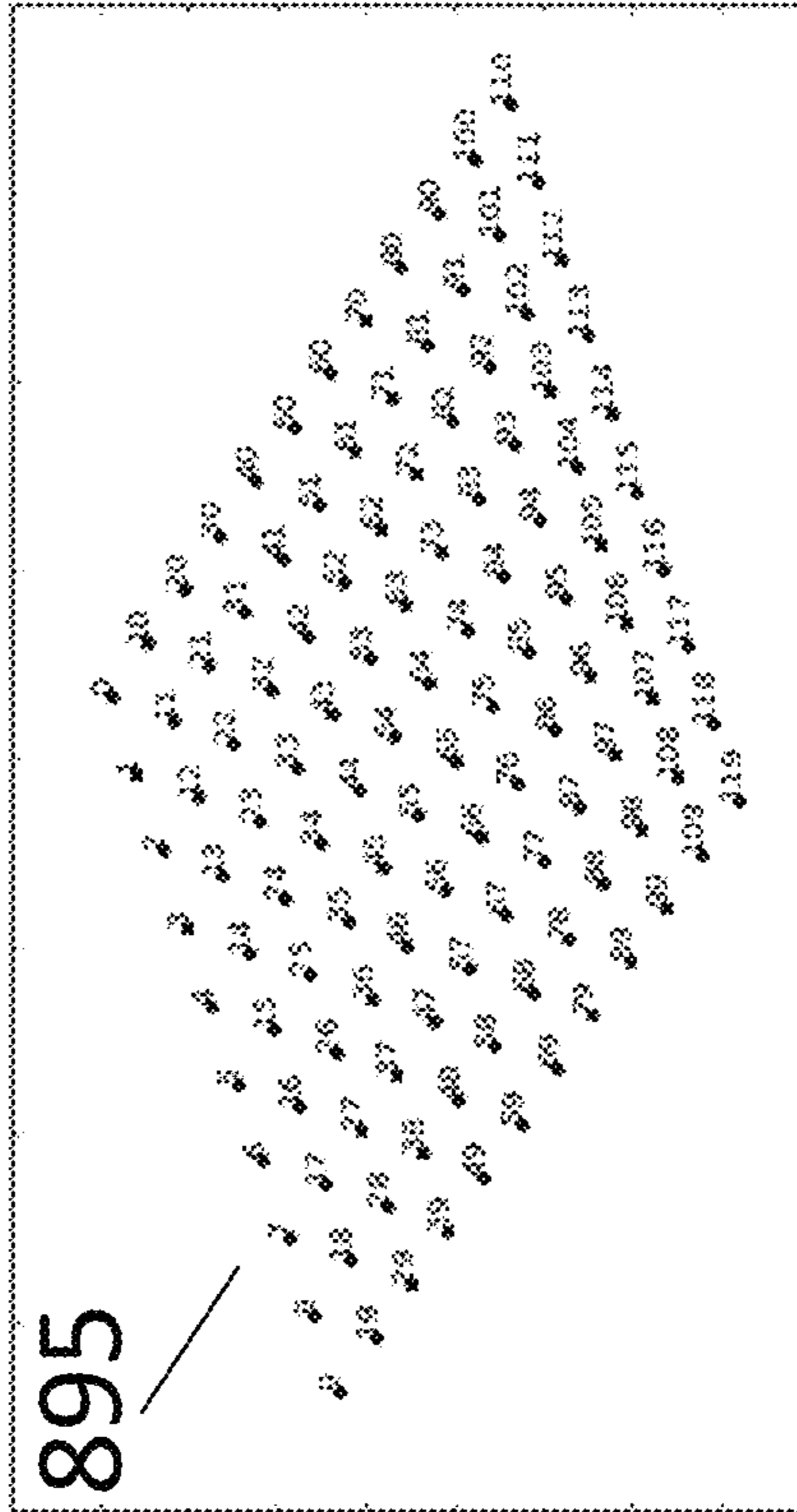
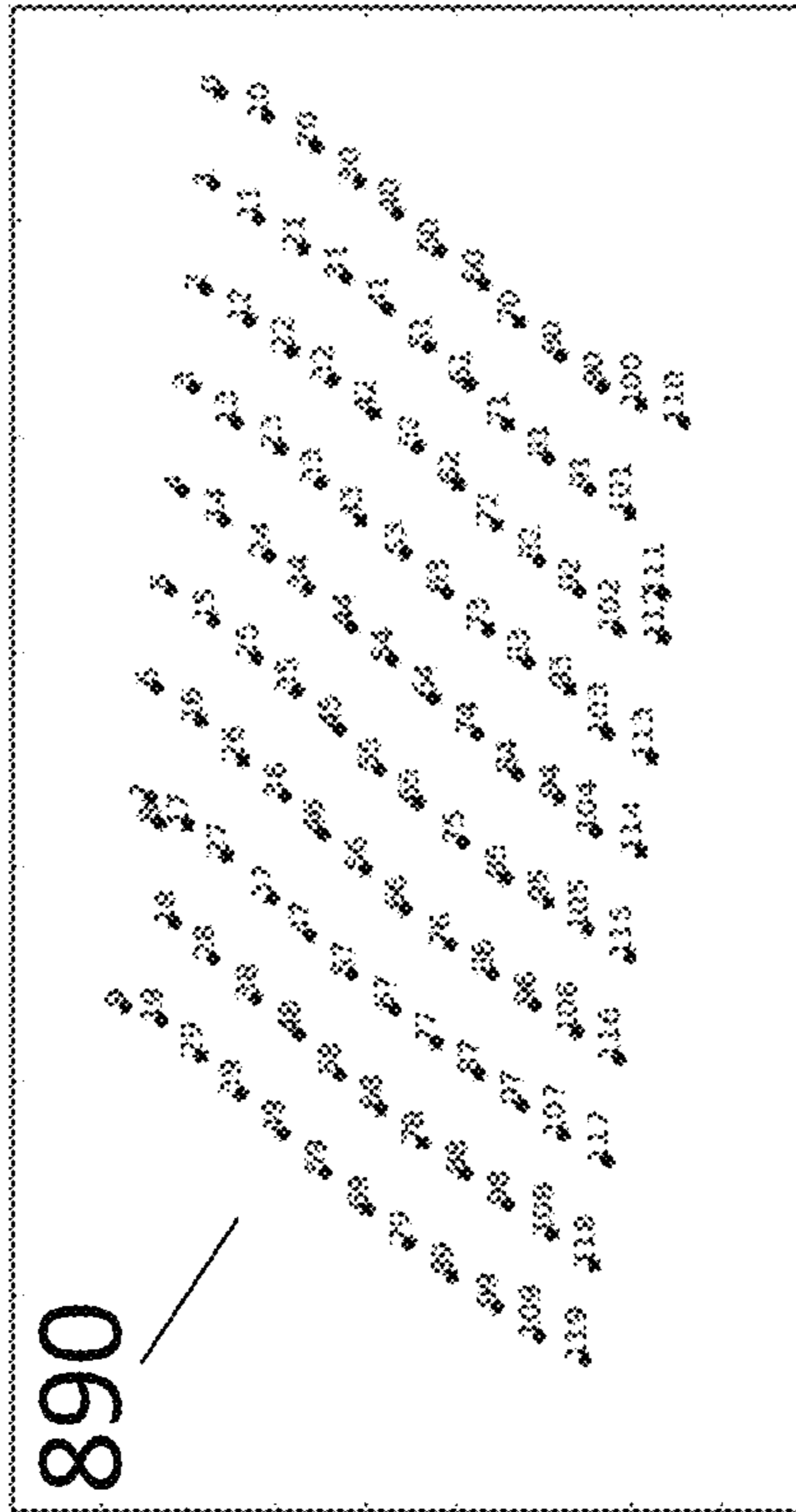
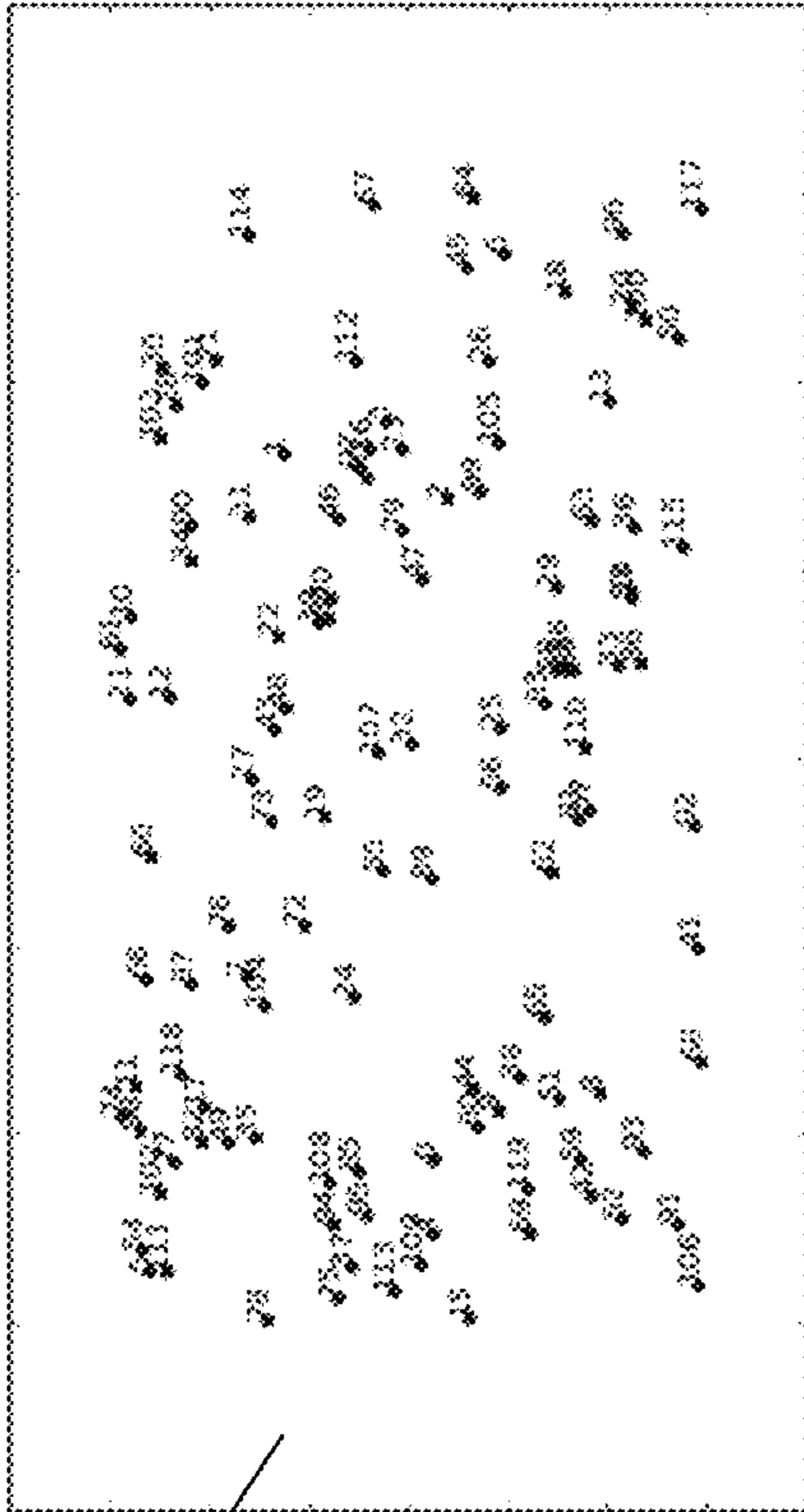
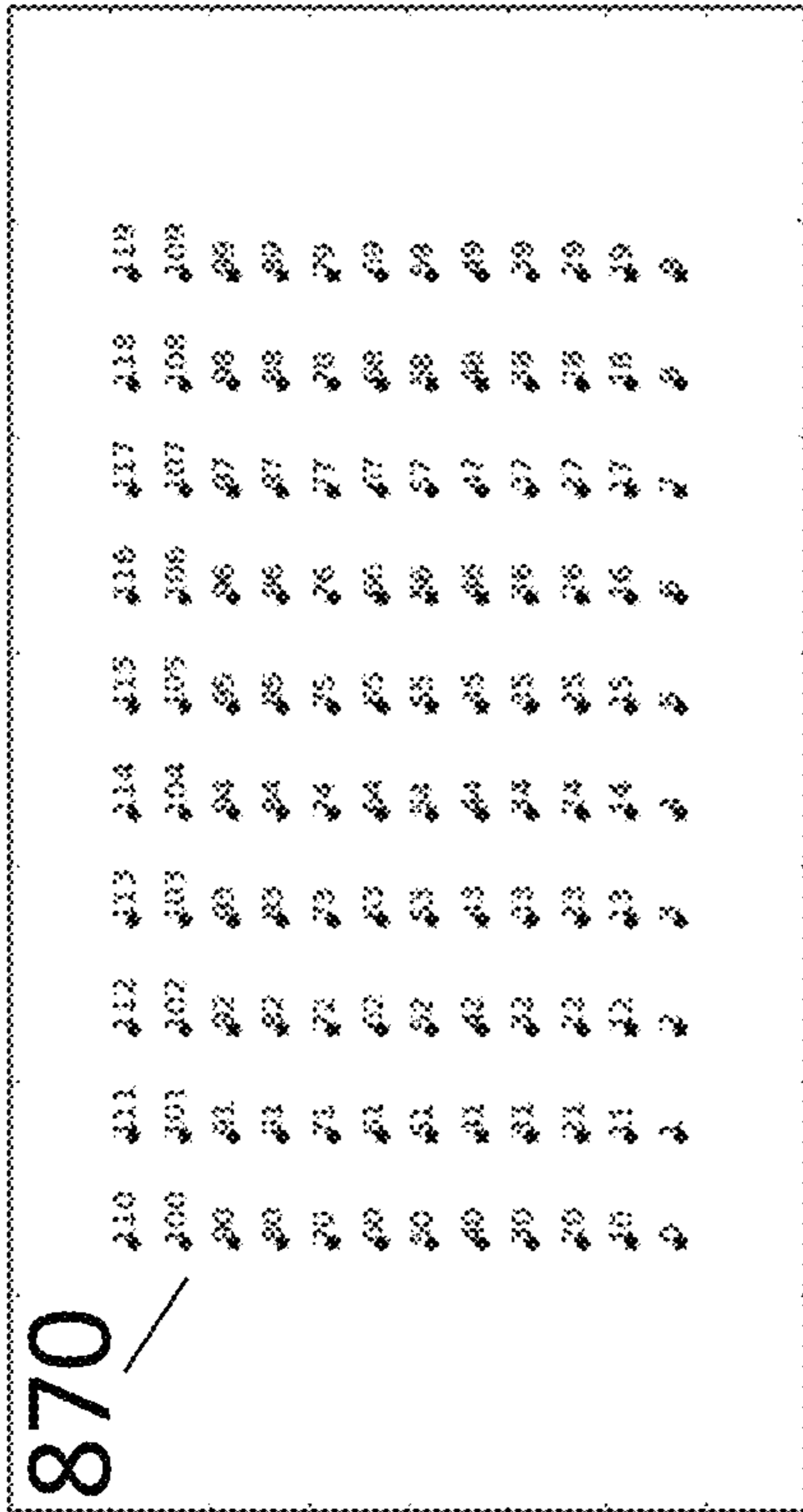


Fig. 8B

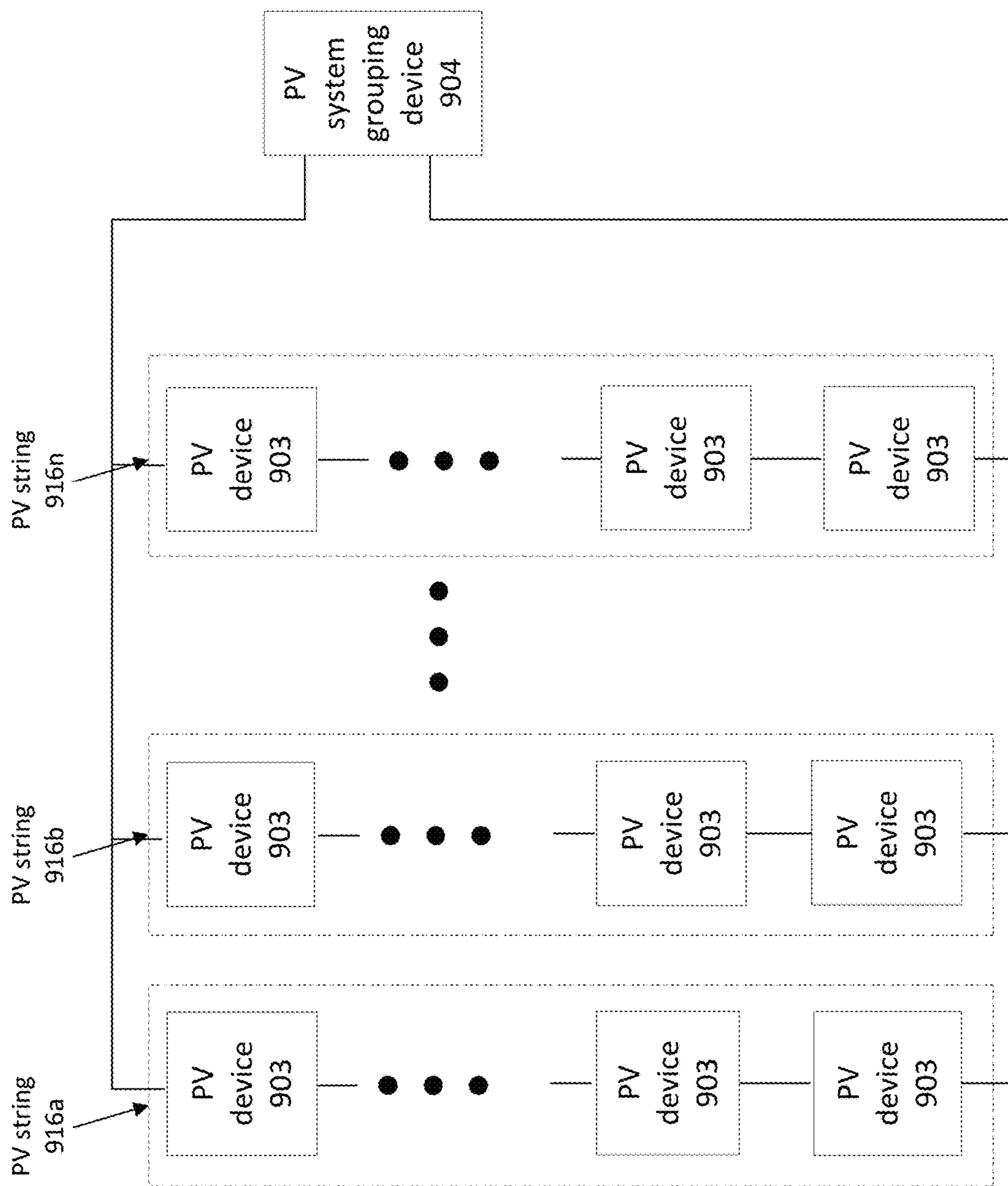


Fig. 9

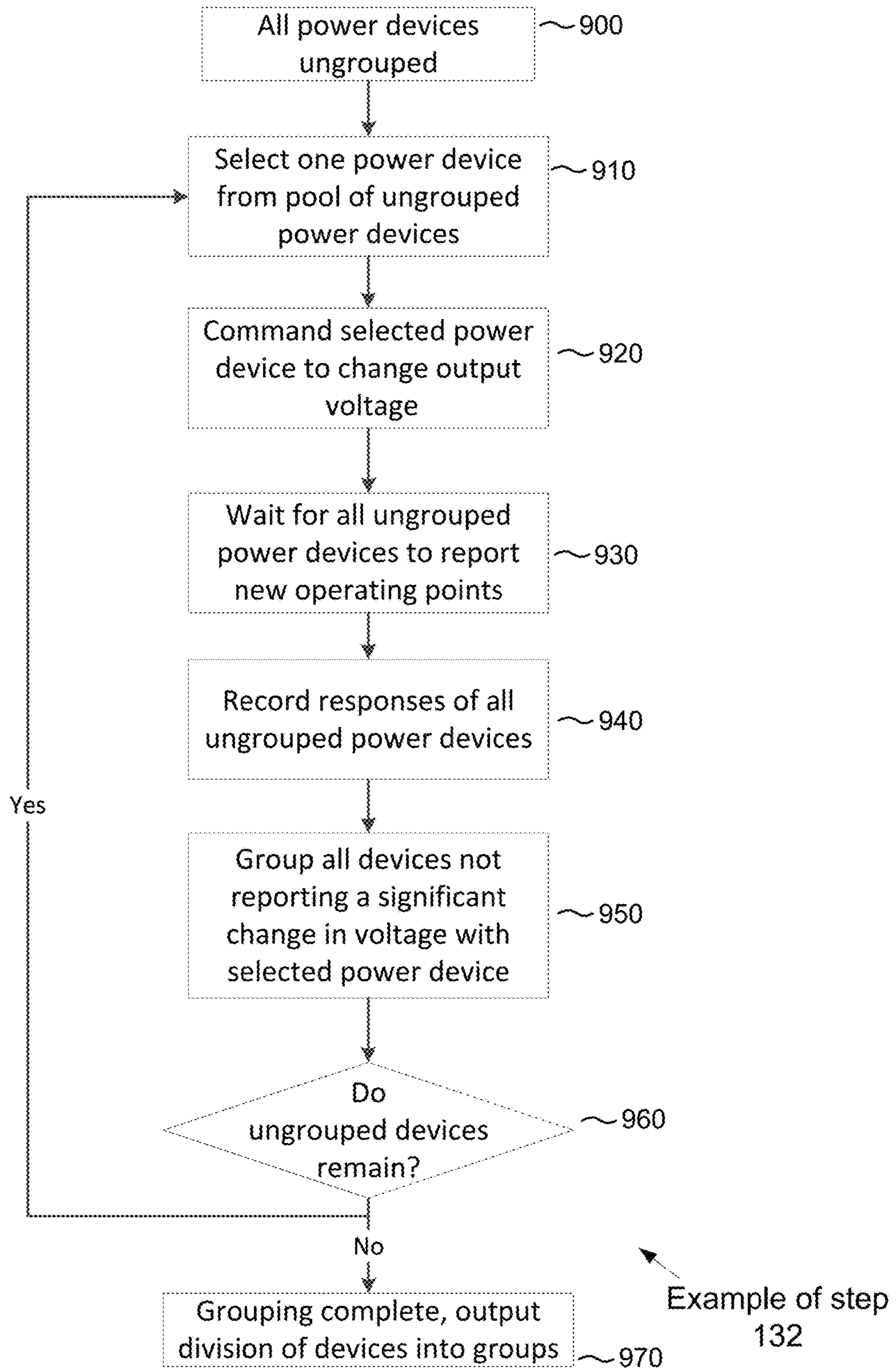


Fig. 10

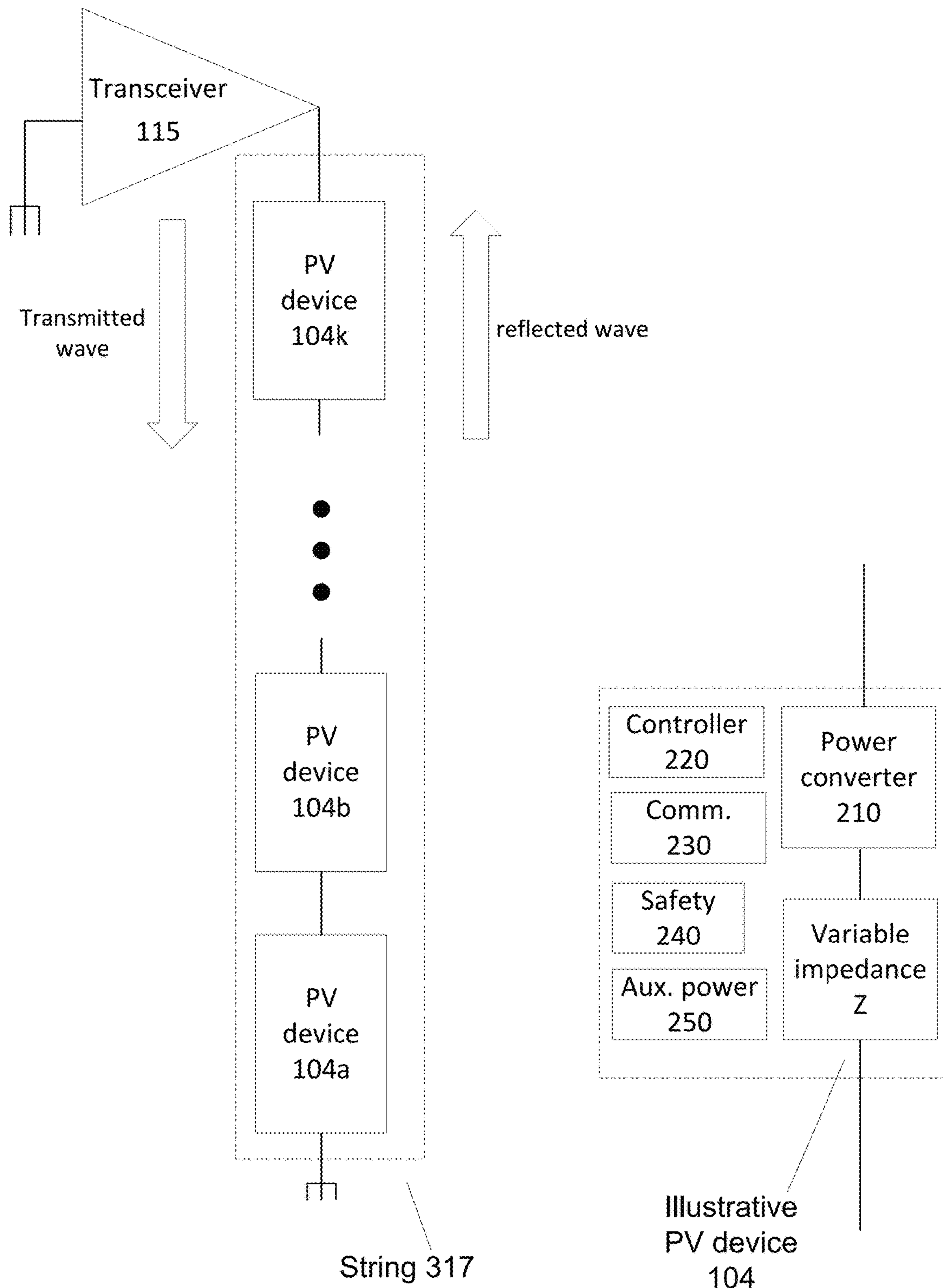


Fig. 11A

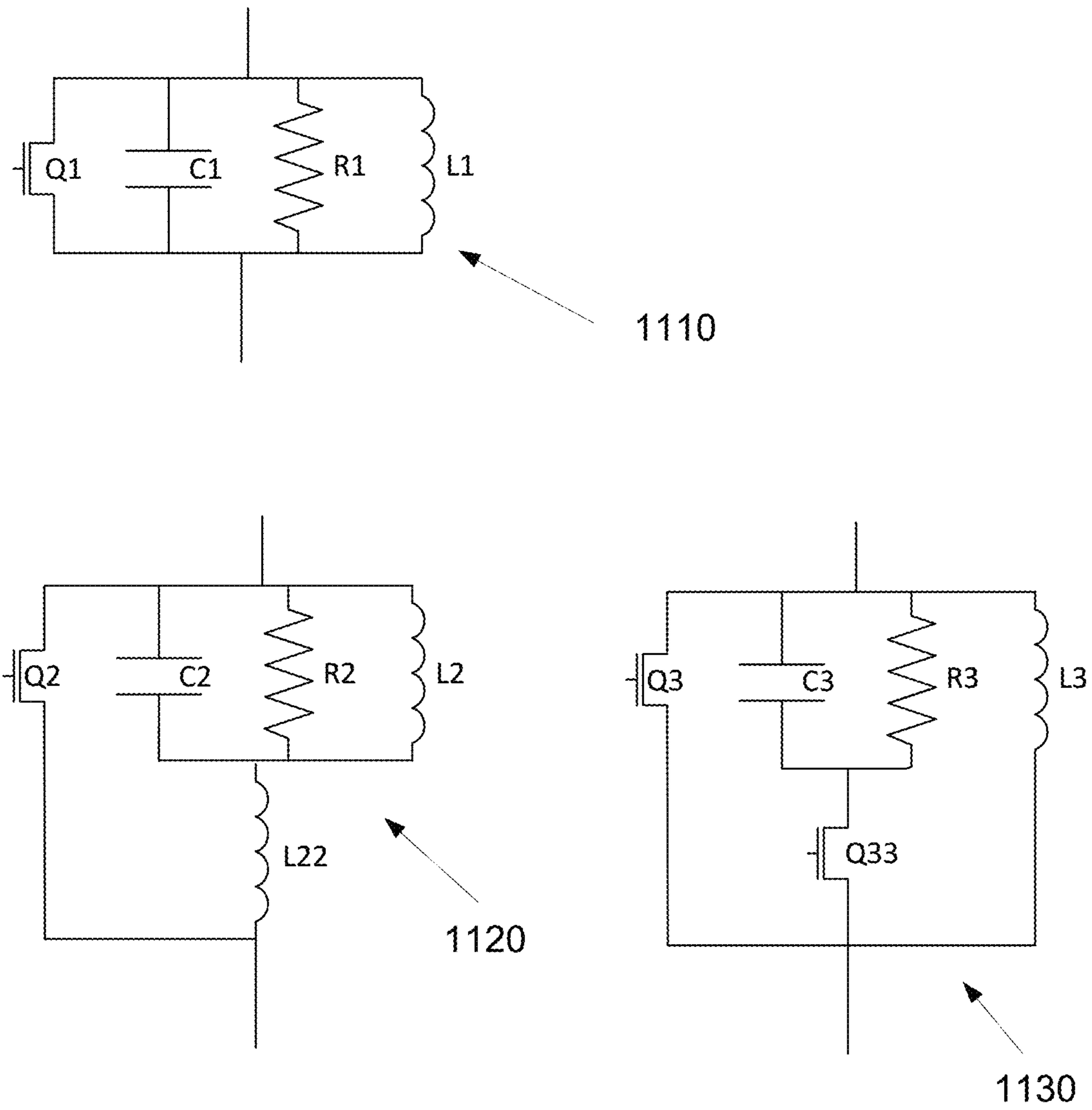


Fig. 11B

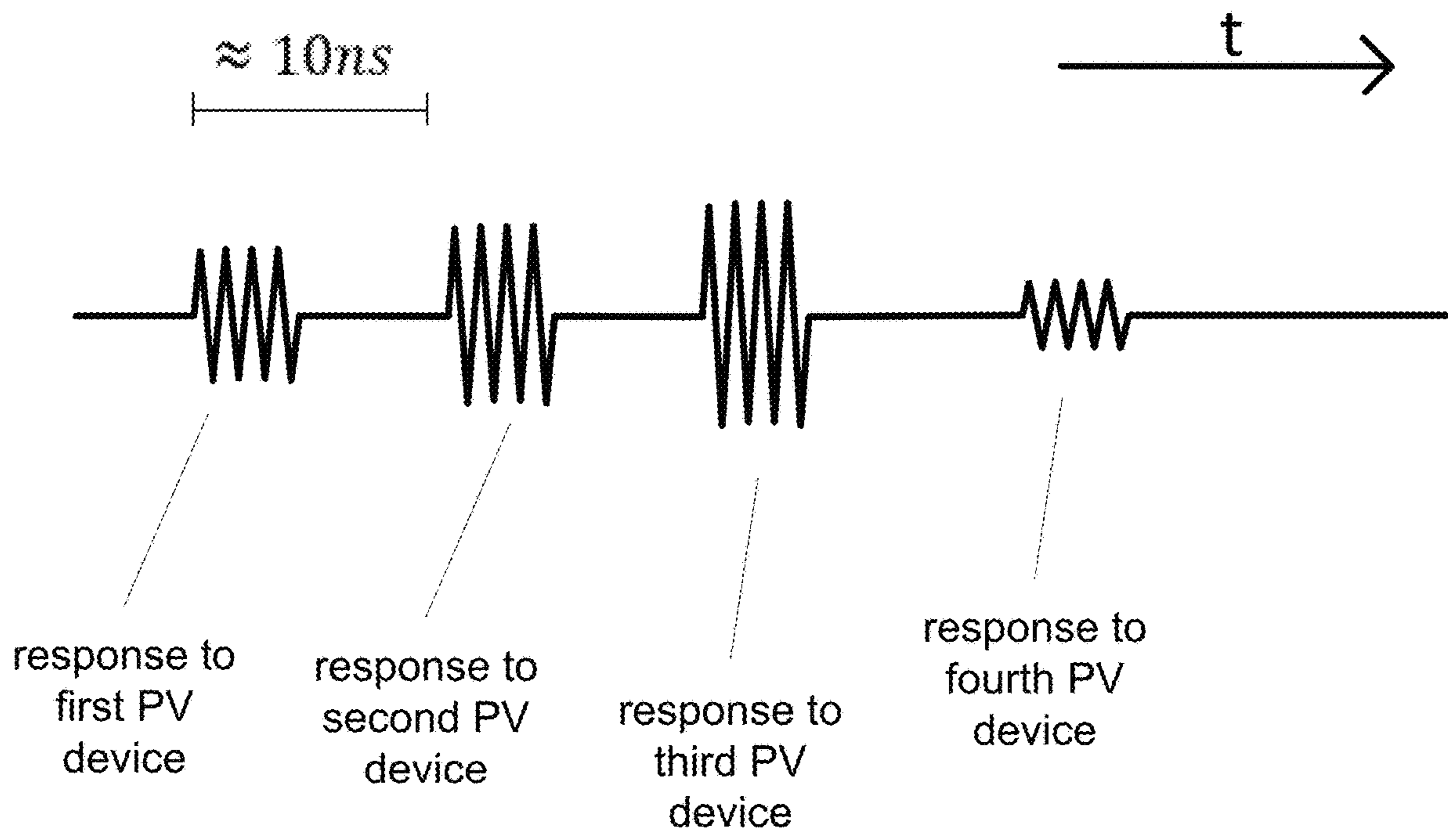


Fig. 12

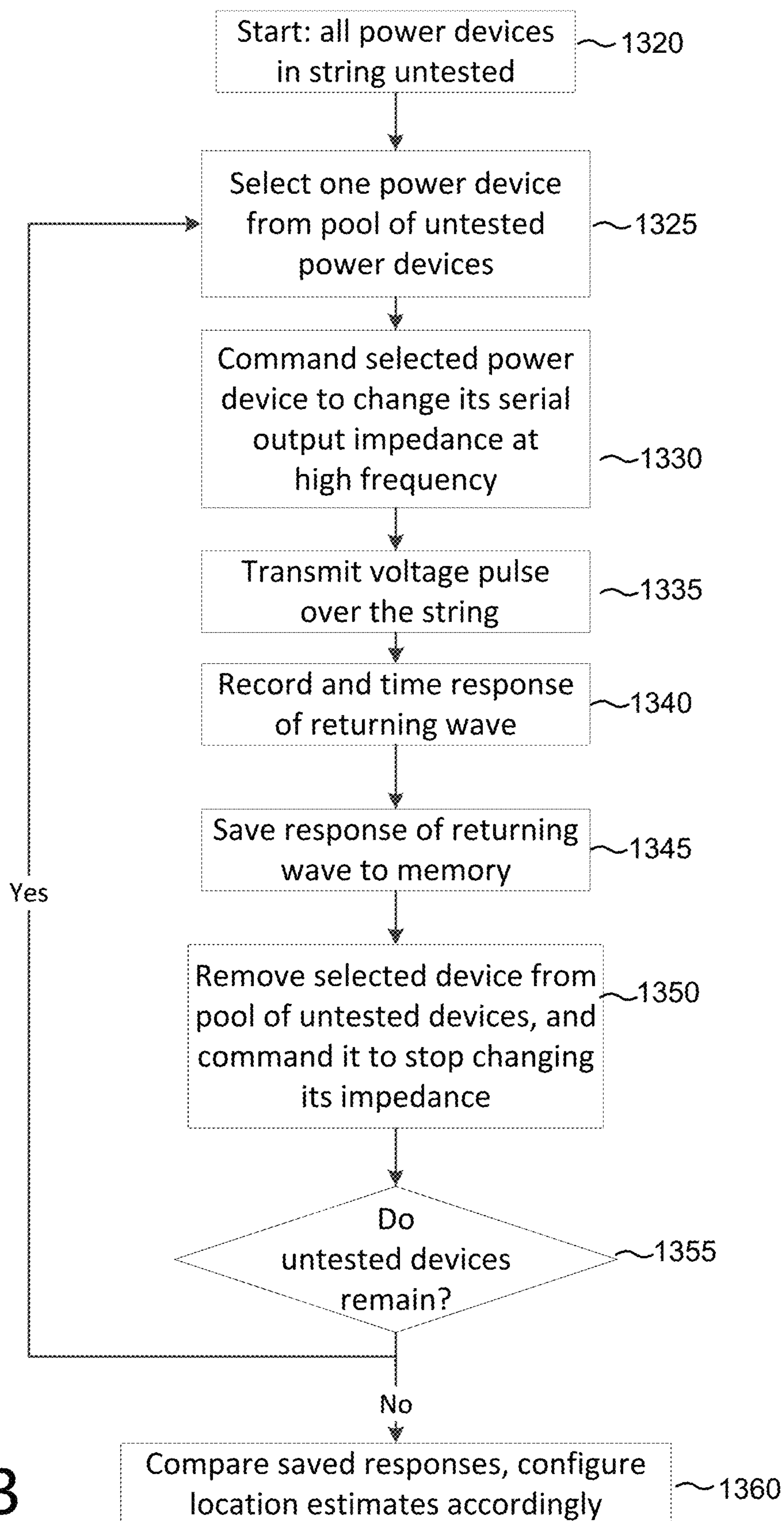


Fig. 13

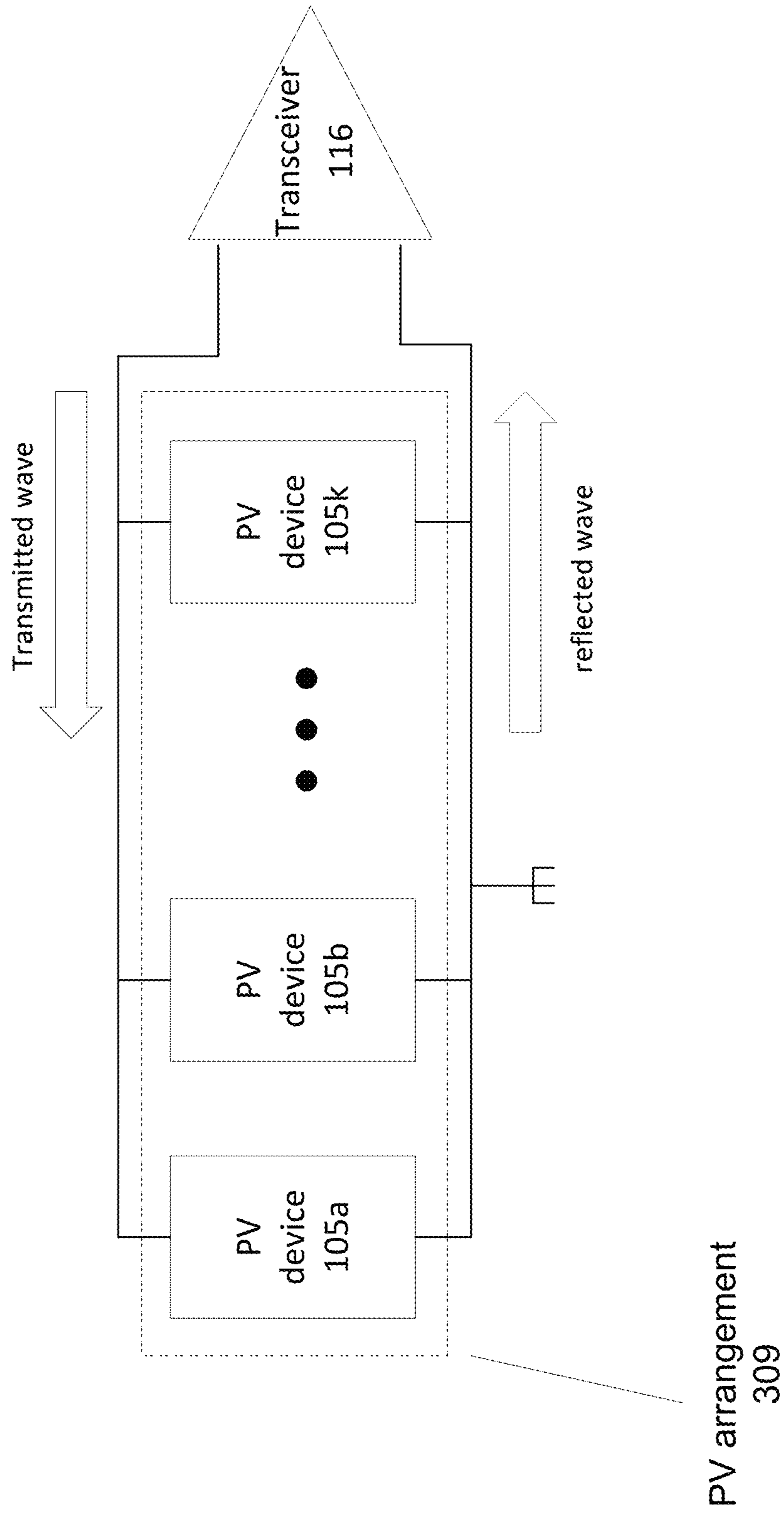


Fig. 14

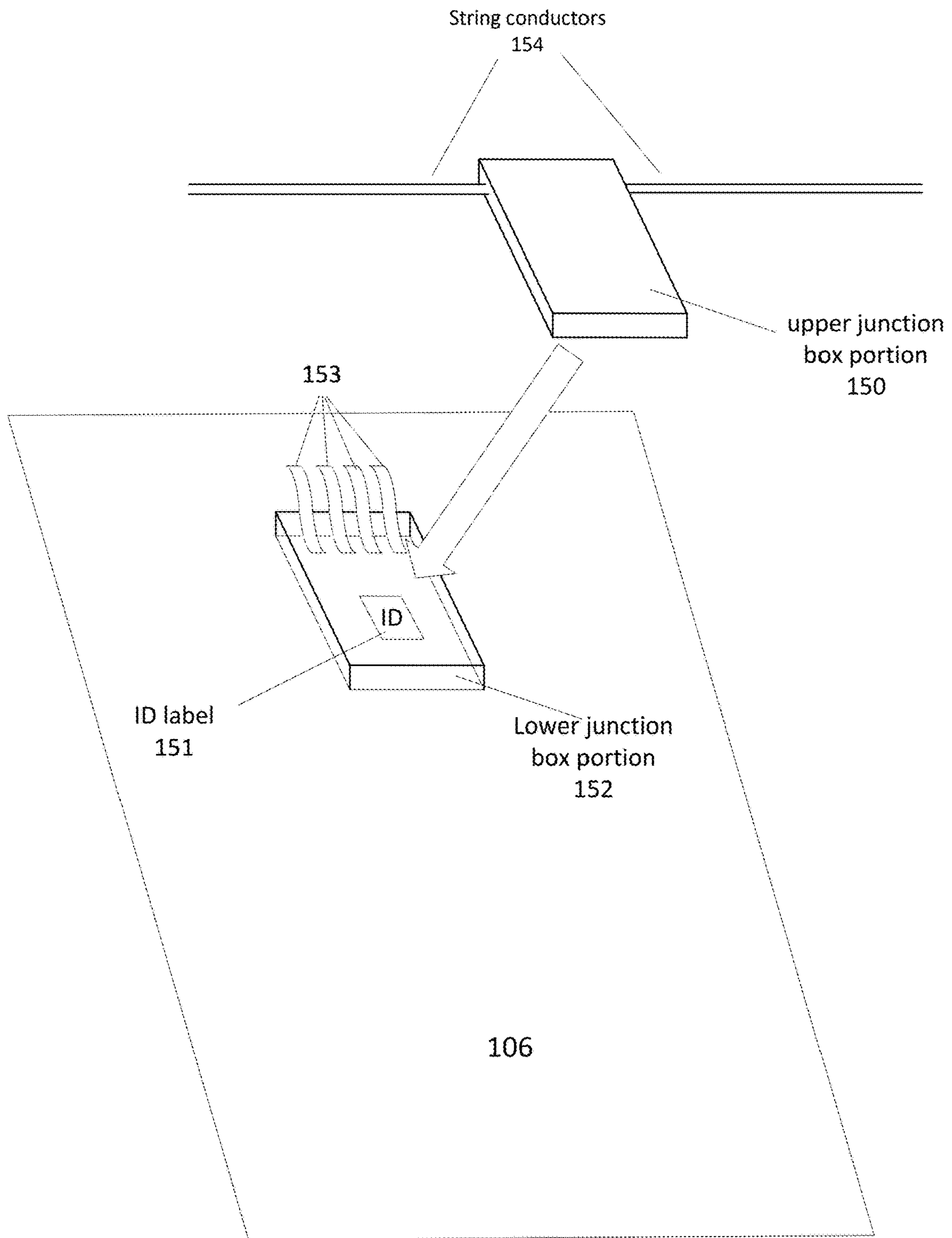
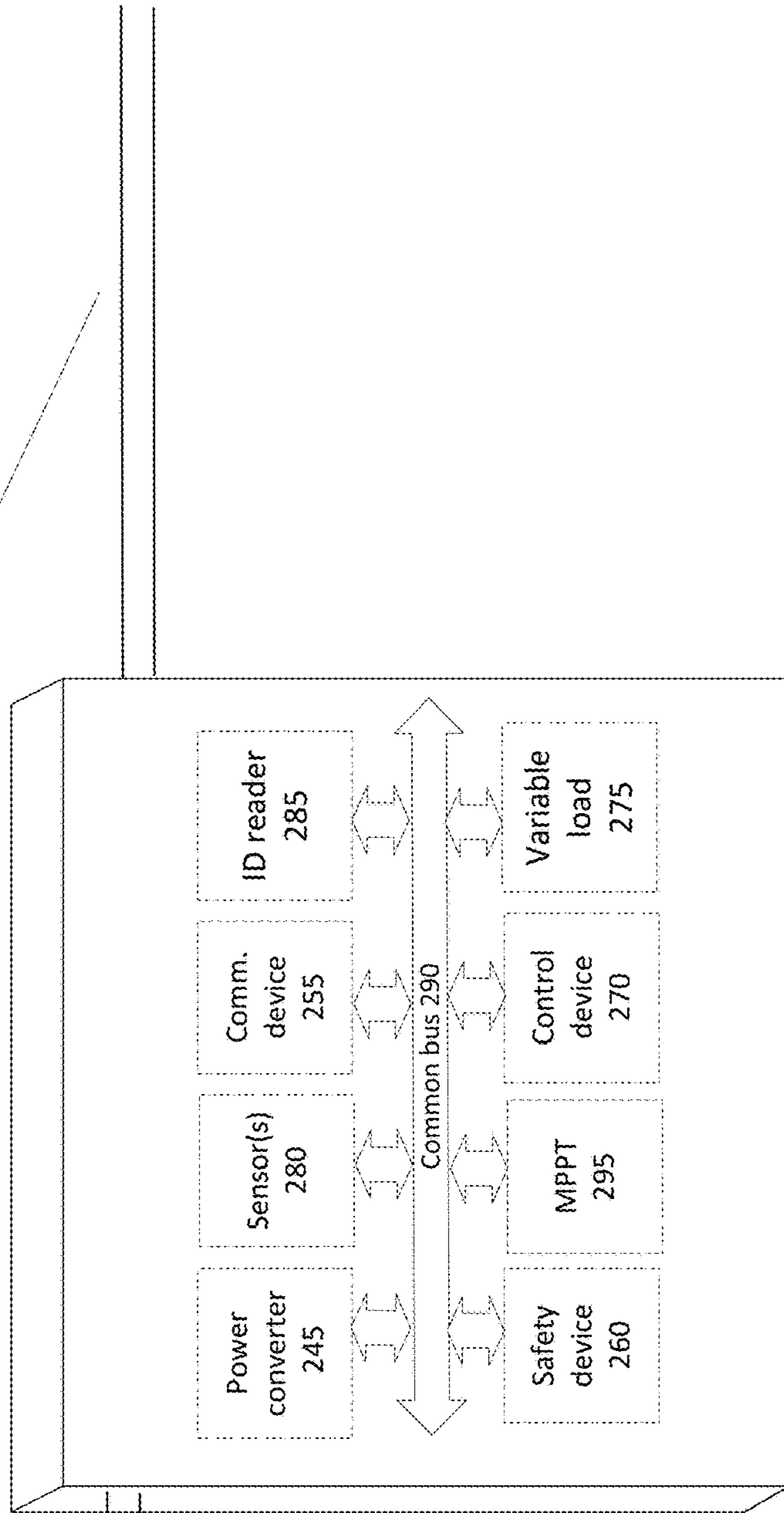


Fig. 15A

String conductors



150

Fig. 15B

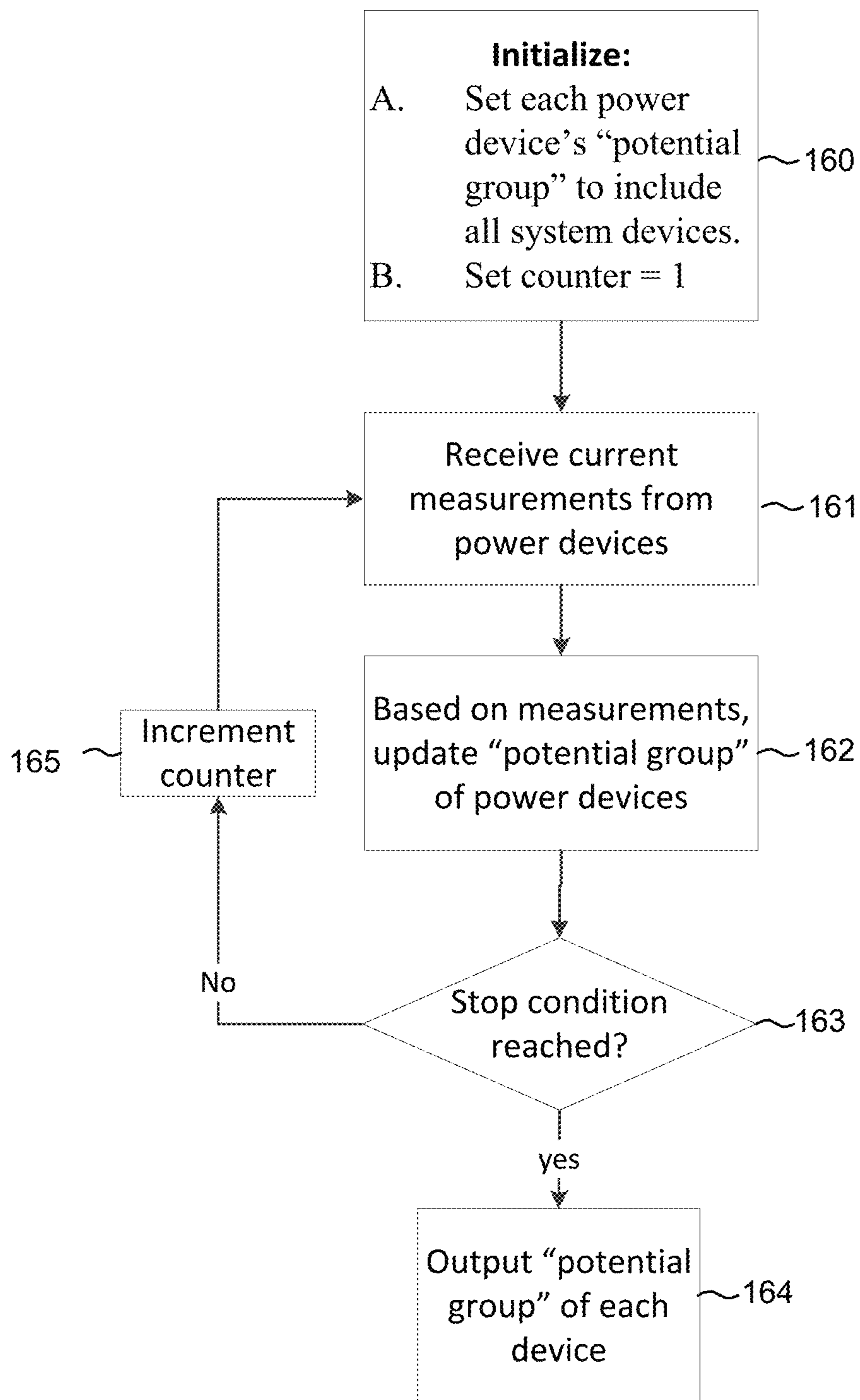


Fig. 16

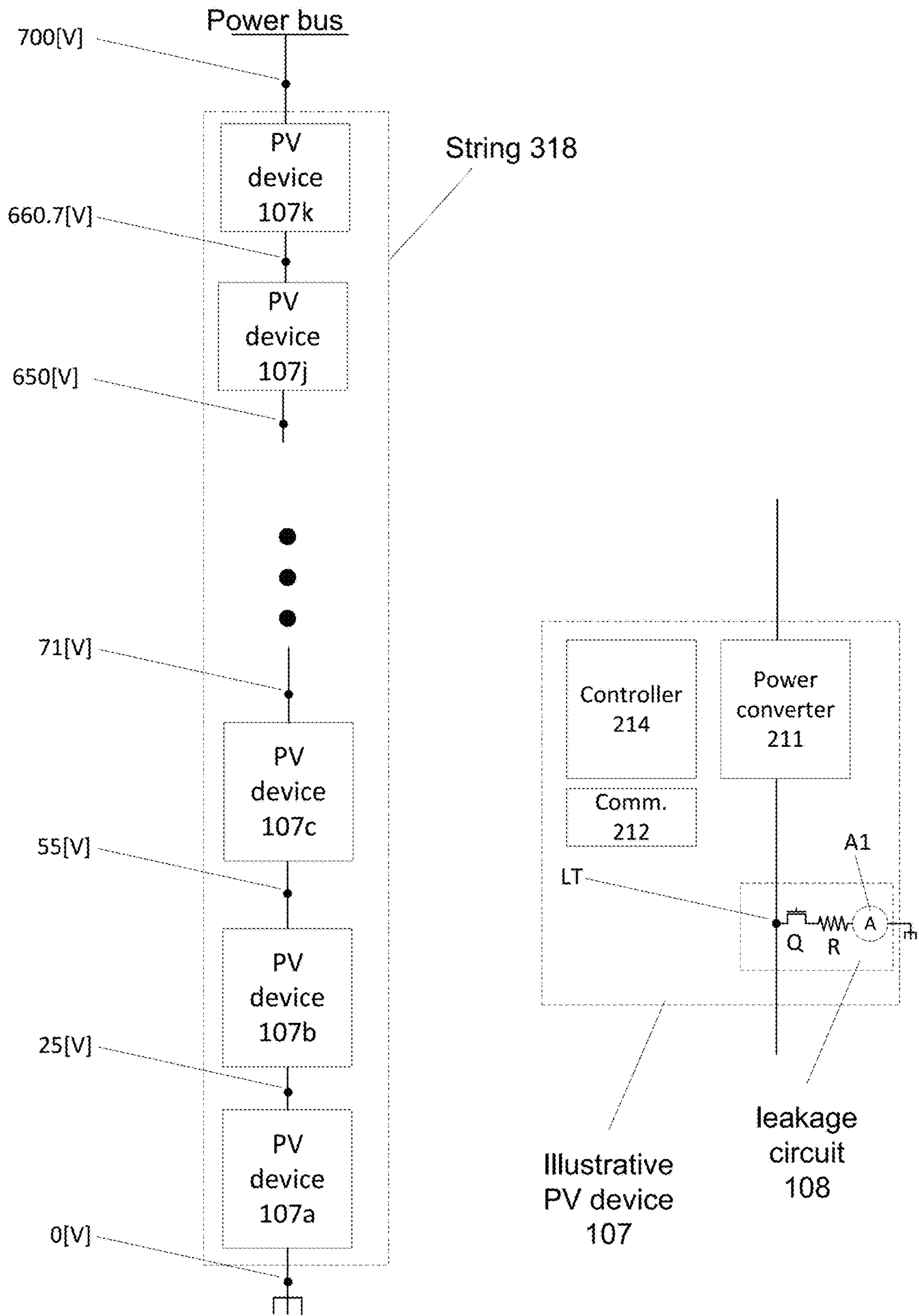


Fig. 17A

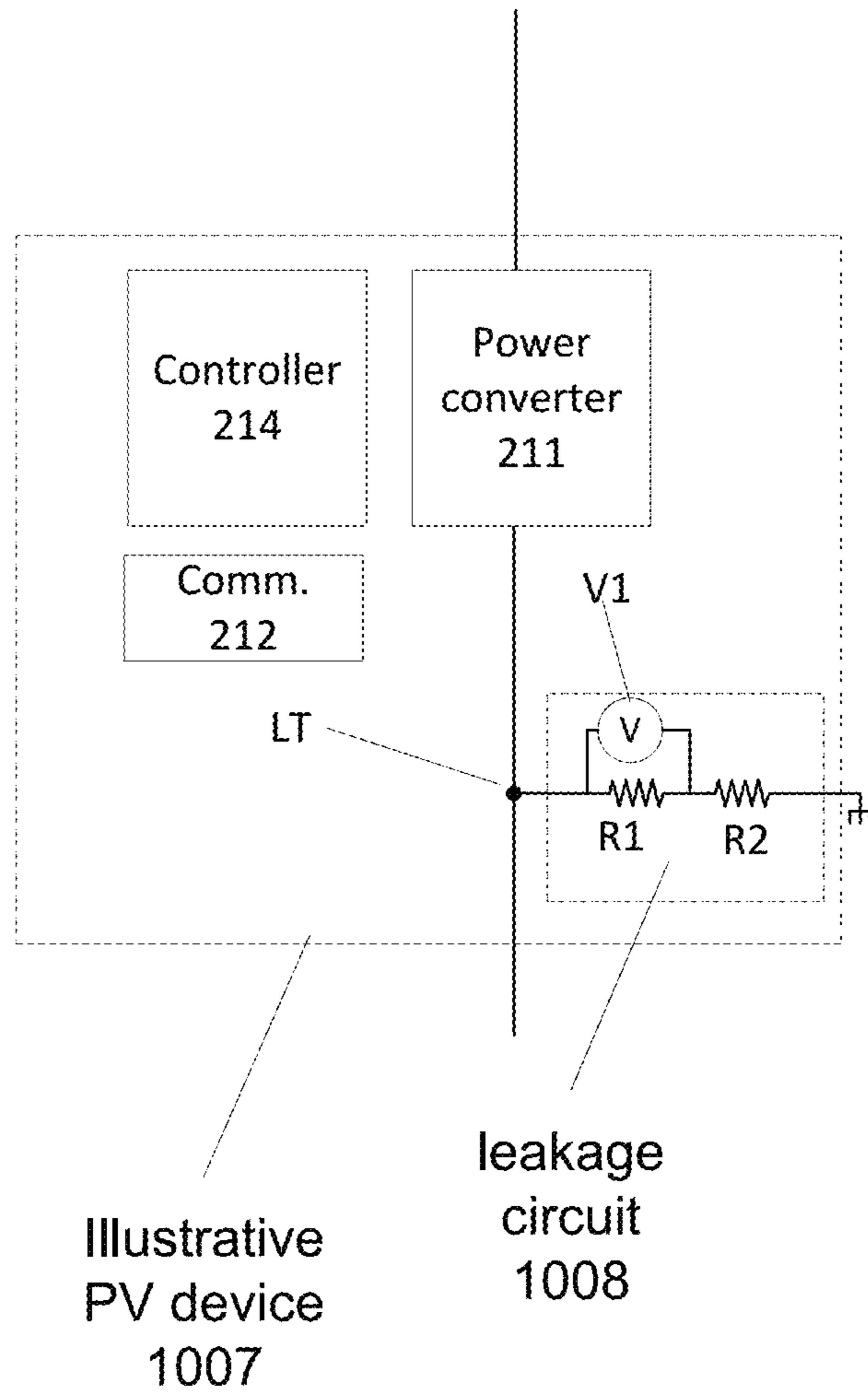


Fig. 17B

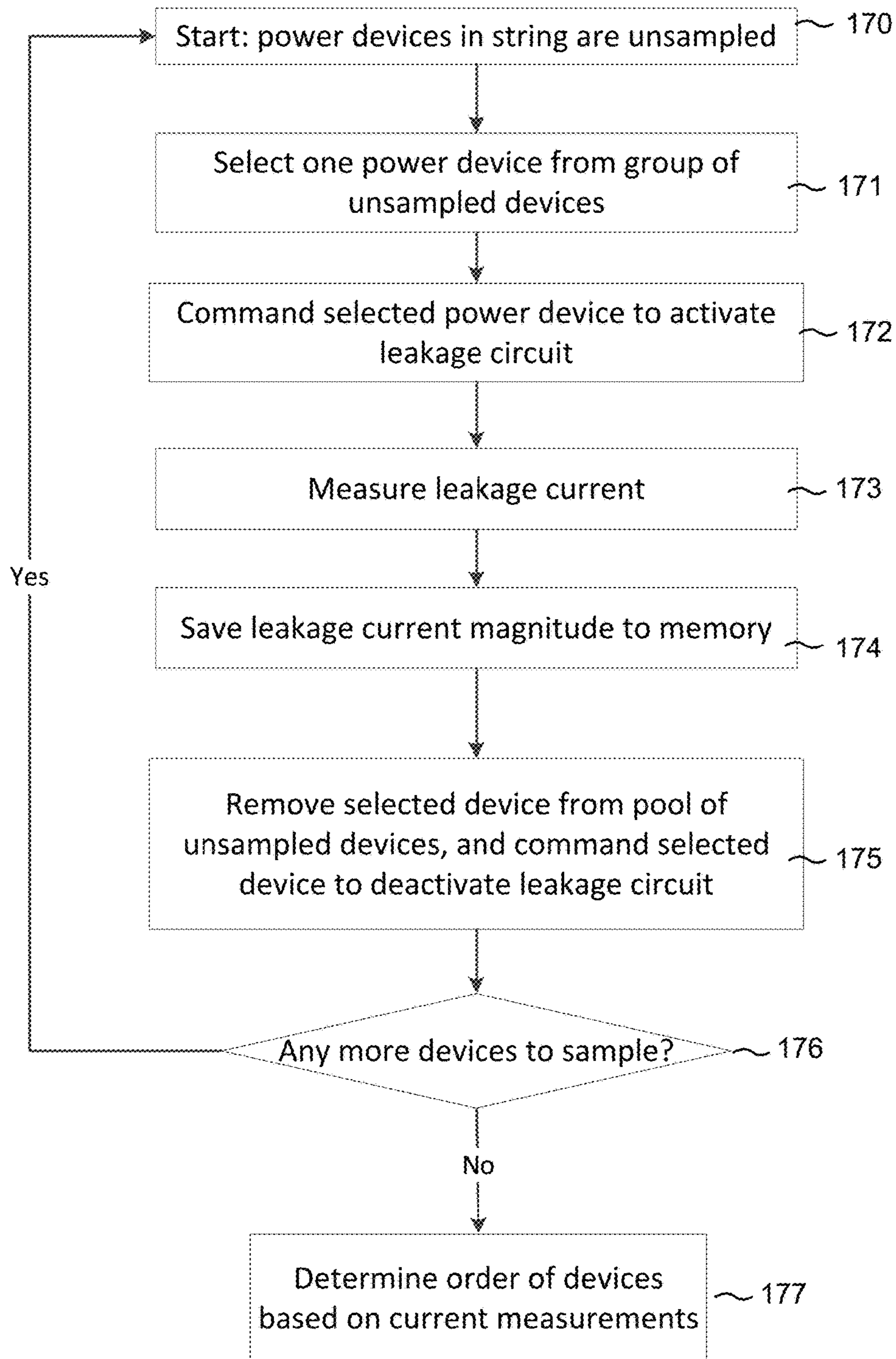


Fig. 18

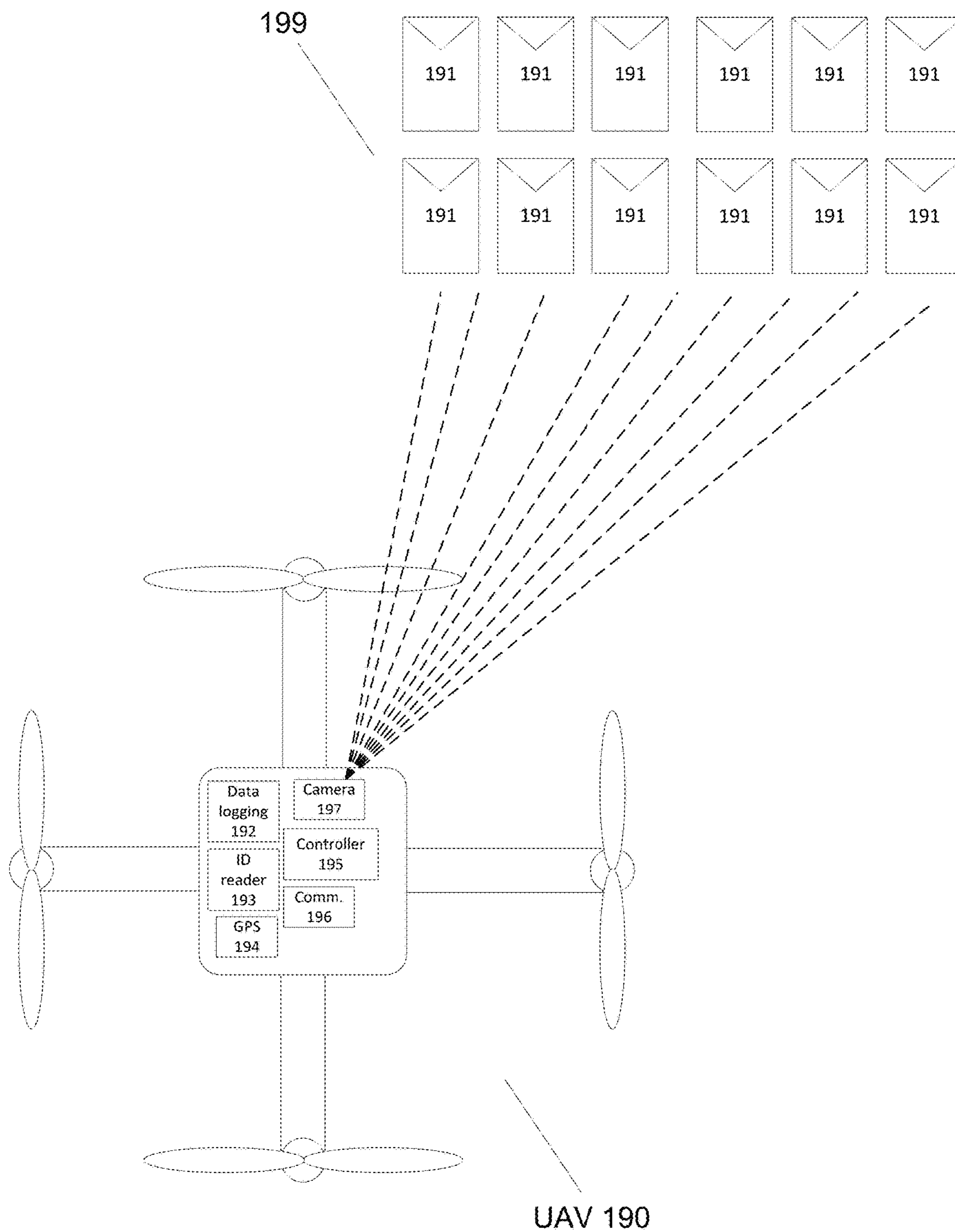


Fig. 19

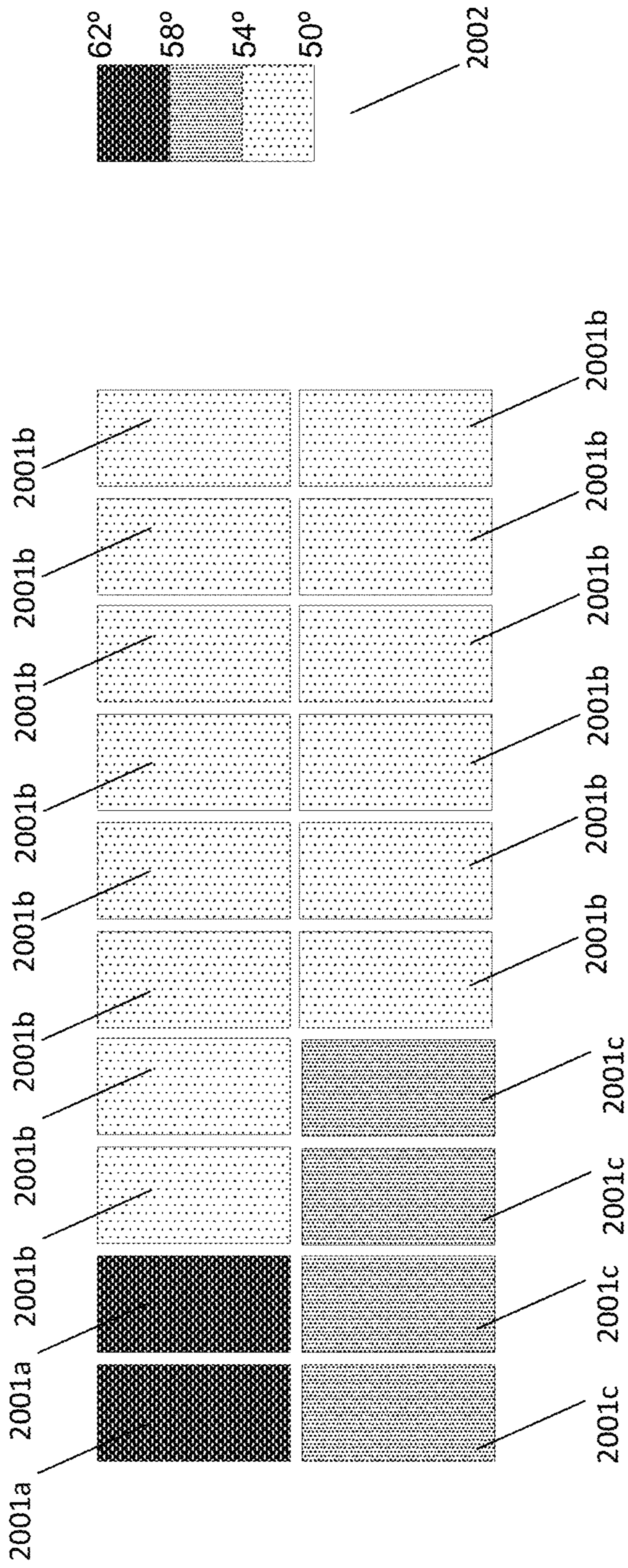


Fig. 20

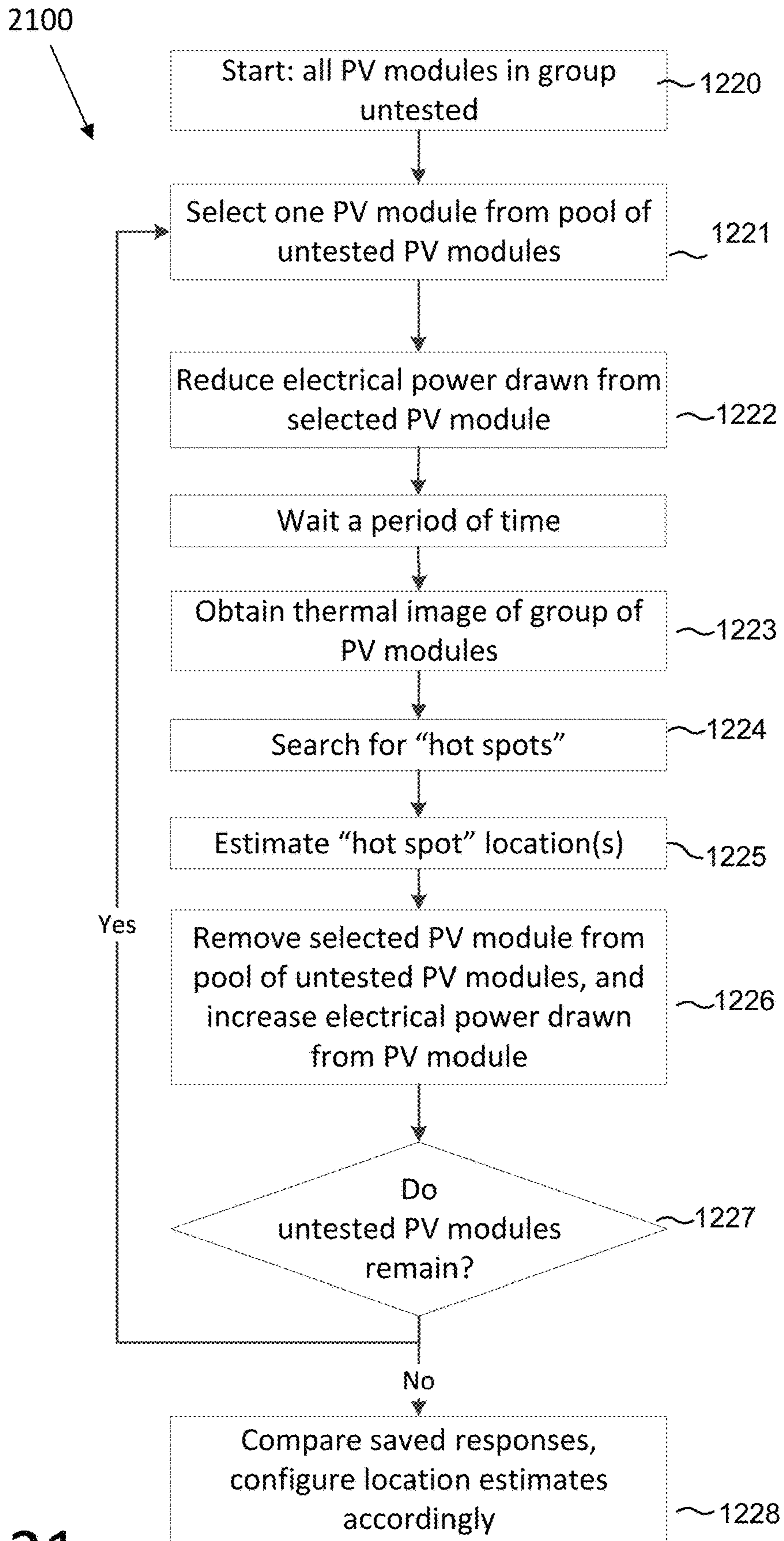


Fig. 21

METHODS FOR MAPPING POWER GENERATION INSTALLATIONS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/447,981, which claims priority to U.S. provisional patent application Ser. No. 62/303,017, filed Mar. 3, 2016, entitled "Methods for Mapping Power Generation Installations," and U.S. provisional patent application Ser. No. 62/381,298, filed Aug. 30, 2016, entitled "Methods for Mapping Power Generation Installations." The above applications are hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties for all purposes.

BACKGROUND

Photovoltaic (PV) installations may include a large number of components and wide variety of devices. A PV installation may include one or more arrays of PV generators (e.g. solar modules, solar cells, solar panels), one or more inverter(s), communication devices, and PV power devices such DC/DC converters, DC-AC microinverters, combiner boxes, and Maximum-Power-Point-Tracking (MPPT) devices. Some installations may further include batteries. Some of the electronic modules may be integrated with the PV modules and may provide other functions such as monitoring of performance and/or protection against theft. In case of the system experiencing power loss or in case of a potentially unsafe condition, it may be desirable for a system maintenance operator to physically locate a particular device (e.g. solar panel, DC-DC converter or micro-inverter) that may be potentially responsible for the power loss or potentially unsafe condition.

Operators and monitoring bodies of PV installations might not always have access to a map which indicates the location of each PV module, identified by a serial number. In such cases, troubleshooting problems may be time consuming, since locating a specific module, e.g., a malfunctioning module, may be difficult. In other instances, a map of the installation may be obtained by significant manual effort, such as a maintenance worker walking through the installation and copying ID numbers off modules, denoting their location on a map. If performed manually, human error may also cause inaccurate information to be recorded in the maps.

There is a need for an automatic or semi-automatic method of generating physical maps of PV installations, to save work and reduce errors, while allowing system monitoring personnel to obtain the benefits of having a map which indicates the locations and ID numbers of PV modules.

SUMMARY

The following summary is a short summary of some of the inventive concepts for illustrative purposes only, and is not intended to limit or constrain the inventions and examples in the detailed description. One skilled in the art will recognize other novel combinations and features from the detailed description.

Embodiments herein may employ methods for generating maps of PV installations. Some illustrative embodiments may be fully automatic, and some may require manual steps.

In illustrative methods, a suitable localization algorithm may be utilized to measure or estimate the global coordi-

nates of photovoltaic (PV) devices, and/or the distance and/or angle between different devices, and/or the distance and/or angle between devices and known locations. Some embodiments may include obtaining the global coordinates of devices. Some embodiments may produce a map displaying the physical placement and location of devices along with identifying information e.g. ID or serial numbers). Some embodiments may utilize high-accuracy Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to map the installation. For example, some illustrative methods may include scanning an identifying barcode on PV devices while using GPS to obtain the global coordinates at each scanned location. In some embodiments, a map not including identifying module information may be further utilized to match specific modules to the measured GPS coordinates. Some embodiments may include PV devices transmitting and receiving wireless signals from one another, and using measured or estimated quantities such as Received Signal Strength Indication (RSSI), Angle of Arrival (AOA, also known as Direction of Arrival, or DOA) and/or Time Difference of Arrival (TDOA) to estimate relative distances and/or angles between modules. In some embodiments, Power Line Communication (PLC) methods may be used along with Time Domain Reflection (TDR) techniques to estimate the location of a set of PV devices within a PV installation. The set of estimates may be processed to obtain an accurate physical map of the installation, including identifying where each PV module and/or PV device is physically located.

In other illustrative methods, photovoltaic modules may be operated to increase and decrease the electrical power produced by the photovoltaic modules, which may result in a change of temperature at the photovoltaic modules. A thermal imaging device may be used to capture thermal images of a group of photovoltaic modules under different power production and temperature conditions, and suitable methods may analyze and aggregate the thermal images to obtain an accurate physical map of the installation.

As noted above, this summary is merely a summary of some of the features described herein. It is not exhaustive, and it is not to be a limitation on the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and other features, aspects, and advantages of the present disclosure will become better understood with regard to the following description, claims, and drawings. The present disclosure is illustrated by way of example, and not limited by, the accompanying figures. A more complete understanding of the present disclosure and the advantages thereof may be acquired by referring to the following description in consideration of the accompanying drawings, in which like reference numbers indicate like features, and wherein:

FIG. 1 is a flow diagram of a method for generating a photovoltaic (PV) installation map according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 2A is a flow diagram of a method for fitting measured locations to a map according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 2B illustrates a non-identifying map (NIM) according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 2C illustrates an estimated layout map (ELM) according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 2D illustrates how illustrative methods may be applied to illustrative PV systems according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 3A is a flow diagram of a method for generating an installation map based on time and location according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 3B is a flow diagram of a method for mapping samples to strings according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 4 illustrates an illustrative of representing and storing a Non-identifying Map according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 5A is a flow diagram of a method for generating a Non-Identifying Map according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 5B illustrates a user interface for PV installation mapping according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 6 illustrates an illustrative embodiment of reading identifying information from a PV device and estimating the device location according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 7 illustrates illustrative devices which may be used for reading identifying information and/or estimating device location according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 8A is a flow diagram of a method for installation mapping according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 8B illustrates results of various stages of installation mapping according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 9 is part-block diagram, part schematic of an illustrative PV installation that may be mapped according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 10 is a flow diagram of a method for grouping power devices into groups according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 11A is a part-block diagram, part-schematic of PV system components which may be used in conjunction with methods described herein.

FIG. 11B is a schematic of illustrative variable impedance circuits according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 12 illustrates an illustrative form of a wave reflected off a transmission line according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 13 is a flow diagram of a method for testing power devices according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 14 is a part-block diagram, part-schematic of a PV arrangement, comprising PV system components, which may be used in conjunction with methods described herein.

FIG. 15A is a part-block diagram, part-schematic of a PV panel and PV system components which may be used in conjunction with methods described herein.

FIG. 15B is a part-block diagram, part-schematic of PV system components which may be used in conjunction with methods described herein.

FIG. 16 is a flow diagram of a method for grouping power devices into strings according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 17A illustrates an illustrative PV string of PV devices according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 17B illustrates an illustrative current leakage circuit according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 18 is a flow diagram of a method for determining the order of power devices within a PV string according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 19 illustrates illustrative devices which may be used for reading identifying information and/or estimating device location according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 20 illustrates a thermal image of a group of photovoltaic modules according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

FIG. 21 is a flow diagram of a method for determining relative locations of one or more PV modules within a group of PV modules according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In the following description of various illustrative embodiments, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form a part hereof, and in which is shown, by way of illustration, various embodiments in which aspects of the disclosure may be practiced. It is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized and structural and functional modifications may be made, without departing from the scope of the present disclosure.

Monitoring of PV installations may include data collected by a central control system which monitors the power output by the PV installation and identifies potentially problematic operating conditions or safety hazards. When the installation experiences power loss, it may be desirable to ascertain whether it is due to environmental conditions or from malfunctions and/or poor maintenance of the components of the PV installation. Furthermore, it may be desirable to easily physically locate the particular module (e.g. solar panel, DC-DC converter or micro-inverter, combiner box) that may be responsible for the power loss. A map of the PV installation which displays the physical location of the various PV modules or devices (identified by ID numbers, for example) comprising the installation may assist in rapid location of the desired module and fast resolution of the problem. For example, in case of a decrease in the power output by a PV panel, a power device coupled to the panel may send information to a centralized control unit reporting the loss of power. The information may be transmitted using power line communications, wireless communication, acoustic communication or other protocols, and may include the ID number of the PV device. If the low power output persists, a maintenance worker may need to physically go to the underperforming panel and investigate the reason behind the low power.

A Physical Identification Map (PIM) may refer to a physical map indicating the location of modules within a photovoltaic (PV) installation, including attaching identifying information such as serial or ID numbers to some or all of the modules displayed in the map. A Non-Identifying Map (NIM) may refer to a map that describes the location of modules but does not identify a specific module at each location.

FIG. 1 is a flow diagram of a method for generating a PV installation map according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure. In one or more embodiments, the method of FIG. 1, or one or more steps thereof, may be performed by one or more computing devices or entities. For example, portions of the method of FIG. 1 may be performed by components of a computer system. The method of FIG. 1, or one or more steps thereof, may be embodied in computer-executable instructions that are stored in a computer-read-

able medium, such as a non-transitory computer-readable medium. The steps in the method of FIG. 1 might not all be performed in the order specified and some steps may be omitted or changed in order.

At step 100, an initial map of a PV installation layout may be created. The initial map may be a physical map. For example, at step 100, measured Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates may be used to match modules to physical locations on a PIM. The initial map may be created and represented in various ways. In one implementation, the initial map may be represented as a text file which includes information regarding the number of devices, the number of rows, the distances between devices, the distances between rows, or any other information relevant to the physical layout of the installation. In another implementation, the basic map may be automatically generated by installation-design software, and the layout information may be encoded in a digital file generated by the installation-design software.

In some embodiments, step 100 might not be performed. For example, step 100 might not be performed if there is high enough accuracy in other steps of the method to compensate for the lack of an initial map.

In steps 110-13, power modules in the PV installation may be scanned. For example, the power modules may be scanned by rows. At step 110 each device in a row of the PV installation may be scanned. The scanning may be carried out using a locating device that combines scanning capabilities with a GPS receiver. The locating device may further include one or more of a clock, memory, communication means and a processing unit. Scanning may comprise utilizing a barcode reader to read a barcode which is attached to the module being scanned (e.g. a barcode on a sticker which is stuck to the module), utilizing a camera to identify serial numbers, obtaining identifying information from an RFID tag, or any combinations thereof. The locating device may be a smartphone running an application which combines barcode reading or serial number identifying with GPS localization. The scanning may comprise taking a picture of an identifying element of the module (e.g. an identification sticker) which can later be processed to identify the module based on the picture. In some embodiments, in step 111 the user may configure the device (e.g. by press of a button) at the start of each row to begin logging a row of the installation. In some embodiments, the locating device may use time or spatial differences between scans to determine when a new row is being scanned. For example, if a time between scans is above a certain threshold, the locating device may determine that a new row is being scanned.

At step 112 each PV device in the current row may be scanned. Each time a device is scanned, the module's identifying information (e.g. barcode, ID number, picture, RFID tag) as well as the GPS coordinates of the locating device at the time of scanning may be logged and stored into memory. The identifying information corresponding to a device may be unique. A timestamp of the time of scanning may also be logged or stored.

At step 113 it may be determined if all rows of the installation have been scanned. For example, it may be determined if all rows within a specified area have been scanned. If all rows have been scanned, the method may proceed to step 120. Otherwise, steps 110-13 may be repeated. Steps 110-13 may be repeated until all rows of the installation, or all devices within the installation, have been scanned.

At step 120, the data (e.g. coordinates, timestamps) collected during steps 110-13 may be collected and input to a

matching algorithm. The map created in step 100 may also be input to the matching algorithm.

At step 130, the matching algorithm may be run by an appropriate computing device, such as a computer, server, DSP, microcontroller, ASIC or FPGA. The algorithm may use the inputted data and/or the map to determine which PV module is located at each of the locations indicated on the map. FIG. 2A, further described below, is an example of a method that may be used by a matching algorithm at step 130.

At step 140, the matching algorithm may generate, based on the input received at step 120, a map of the PV installation. The map may comprise one or more module identifiers. The module identifiers may be associated with a location in the map. For example, the algorithm may output a map with module identification information being displayed at each module's location. The map may be physically printed onto a sheet of paper, or viewed on an appropriate electronic device such as a computer monitor, tablet or smartphone.

FIG. 2A is a flow diagram of a method for fitting measured locations to a map according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure. In one or more embodiments, the method of FIG. 2A, or one or more steps thereof, may be performed by one or more computing devices or entities. For example, portions of the method of FIG. 2A may be performed by components of a computer system. The method of FIG. 2A, or one or more steps thereof, may be embodied in computer-executable instructions that are stored in a computer-readable medium, such as a non-transitory computer-readable medium. The steps in the method of FIG. 2A might not all be performed in the order specified and some steps may be omitted or changed in order.

At step 131, a map and/or GPS coordinates may be received. For example, the map and/or GPS coordinates may be loaded from memory. The map and/or GPS coordinates may have been measured when scanning PV modules. The received map may comprise a non-identifying map (NIM), which might not include identifying module information.

At step 132, the GPS measurements may be grouped into rows. In some embodiments, the grouping into rows may be done while scanning one or more modules. For example, a scanning operator may press a reset button when beginning to scan, or prior to scanning, each row. In some embodiments, the grouping of measurements into rows may be carried out by a computer algorithm, using methods further described herein. The grouping of measurements into rows may be helpful, for example, when the PIM is generated using an NIM, which already indicates the number of rows and the length of each row. In embodiments in which the PIM is generated without benefit of a pre-existing NIM, the grouping into rows may allow for filtering of measurement noise. For example, filtering, or reduction, of measurement noise may be performed by determining the standard distance and angle between adjacent panels in a same row. Steps 133-37 may be performed iteratively, until the first row of scanned samples has been considered as a candidate to represent each row of the installation. At step 133, a row is selected from the NIM. At step 134, the first row of location measurements may be fit to the selected row. At step 135, having fit the first row of location measurements to the selected row, the other rows of measured samples may be fit to the other rows of the NIM, using "snap to grid" or similar methods. In some embodiments, attempted fitting of the other rows of measured samples to the other NIM rows may be carried out multiple times, using multiple row orienta-

tions, before an optimal fitting (by an appropriate criterion such as Least Squares) is selected.

At step 136, a total fitting error may be calculated. The total fitting error may be based on the estimated locations of each device and/or the locations indicated by the NIM. Estimated individual errors of each device may be aggregated by an appropriate criterion, such as Sum of Squares. The selected fitting and resultant aggregated error may be stored. For example, the selected fitting and resultant aggregated error may be stored in an appropriate memory device.

At step 137, the method may determine if all NIM rows have been considered as the row represented by the first row of measurements. If some NIM rows have not been considered the method may loop back to step 134. For example, the NIM rows that have not been considered may be candidates for consideration in later iterations. If it is determined, at step 137, that all NIM rows have been considered, the method may proceed to step 138.

At step 138, one or more aggregated errors calculated and stored at step 136 may be compared to one another to select a fitting. In one implementation, a fitting corresponding to the minimum aggregated error may be selected. Other factors may be considered at step 138.

At step 139, the fitting selected at step 138 may be output, transforming the NIM to a PIM that includes the fitting selected at step 138. In some embodiments, steps 134-37 may be modified such that instead of fitting the first row of measurements to each row in the NIM, each row of measurements is fitted to a certain row of the MM (for example, the first row of the NIM).

Reference is now made to FIGS. 2B and 2C, which depict illustrative examples of a PV installation which may be mapped according to illustrative embodiments. FIG. 2B illustrates a Non-Identifying Map (NIM) 215 that may be generated, using methods described herein, to reflect a layout of the PV installation. FIG. 2C illustrates an Estimated Layout Map (ELM) 217 of the installation, which may be obtained using methods described herein to estimate the absolute locations of PV devices or the locations with regard to one another. FIGS. 2B and 2C may correspond to a same PV installation.

In FIGS. 2B-D, the illustrated squares may correspond to device locations according to the NIM, and the circles may correspond to device locations according to measured data corresponding to the devices. In certain instances, the PV system may be of a non-symmetric layout. For example, in the NIM 215, one row has two fewer devices than the other two rows. In certain instances, because of measurement inaccuracies and/or noise, an ELM, such as the ELM 217, may contain inaccuracies.

Reference is now made to FIG. 2D, which illustrates aspects of steps 134-36, described above in FIG. 2A, as applied to the PV system illustrated in FIGS. 2B-C. In Fitting A, at step 133, the first row of the NIM is selected. At step 134, the first row of location measurements is fit to the selected first row of the NIM, and at step 135 the remaining two rows are fit to the NIM in a way that minimizes the total mismatch between the NIM-devices (depicted as squares) and the ELM devices (depicted as circles). At step 136, the total fitting error is calculated. Different error measures may be considered. For example, a sum-of-squares error measure may be considered. If, for example three devices are estimated to be at the following locations along the XY-plane: (0,0), (1,0) and (2,0), while according to the NIM the three devices are actually located at (0,0.5), (1, 1.5) and (2,0), the square of the estimation error for the first device will be $(0-0)^2+(0-0.5)^2=0.25$.

Similarly, the squared estimation error for the second device will be $(1-1)^2+(0-1.5)^2=2.25$. The third device location is perfectly estimated, with zero error, leading to a total error of 2.5. Other error measures may be considered as well, such as Sum of Absolute Errors, or weighted variations which may take other considerations into account and/or add penalty factors to certain types of errors.

At step 137, the method may loop back to step 133, as the first row of measurements has been fit to the first NIM, and other map rows have not been fit. At step 134, the first row of measurements is fit to the second NIM row, and at step 135, the other EL rows are "snapped" to the NIM and fitted to the other NIM rows, as shown in Fitting B. The matching illustrated in Fitting B is less successful than the one shown in Fitting A, and the fitting error calculated in step 136 will be higher. At step 137, the method will determine that the first row of measurements has not yet been fit to one of the NIM rows (the third), and it will loop back to step 133 and select the third NIM row. At step 134, the first row of measurements may be fit to the third NIM row, and at step 135, the other EL rows may be "snapped" to the NIM and fitted to the other NIM rows. Several fittings are possible, as illustrated by Fitting C and Fitting D, and by various methods the algorithm can be configured to consider multiple fittings and select one of the fittings, for example, a fitting with minimal estimation error or a least estimation error. At step 136 the fitting error will be calculated, and at step 137 the algorithm will determine that the first row of measurements has now been fit to all of the NIM rows, and will proceed to step 138. At step 138, the algorithm will determine that Fitting A has the lowest estimation error of all the fittings considered, and will output Fitting A at step 139.

FIG. 3A is a flow diagram of a method for generating an installation map based on time and location according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure. In one or more embodiments, the method of FIG. 3A, or one or more steps thereof, may be performed by one or more computing devices or entities. For example, portions of the method of FIG. 3A may be performed by components of a computer system. The method of FIG. 3A, or one or more steps thereof, may be embodied in computer-executable instructions that are stored in a computer-readable medium, such as a non-transitory computer-readable medium. The steps in the method of FIG. 3A might not all be performed in the order specified and some steps may be omitted or changed in order.

The method of FIG. 3A may be used for grouping device measurements into rows. For example, the method of FIG. 3A may be performed at step 132 of FIG. 2A. According to this illustrative embodiment, each row of an installation may be processed such that the time that elapses between scanning a device in the row and the adjacent device in the row is less than a certain threshold, such as, for example, 10 seconds. The installer may be instructed to scan each device in the row rapidly, and take a short break between rows. The scanning device may be configured to record the time each device was scanned.

At step 310, a time difference between each pair of consecutive scans may be calculated. At step 320 the calculated time differences may be compared to a threshold amount of time. In some embodiments the threshold may be preset or predefined, and in some embodiments the threshold may be derived from calculated time differences (e.g., the threshold may be twenty percent longer than an average time difference between consecutive scans). At step 330, if the time difference between the timestamps of scanning two consecutive devices is above the threshold, the two devices

may be determined to be in different rows, and may be mapped to different rows at step 340. If the time difference is below the threshold, the two devices may be determined to be in a same row, and mapped to the same row at step 350. Alternatively, or in addition to the method described above, the installer may be instructed to press a “New Row” button on his or her device between rows, which may indicate completing the scanning of one row and beginning another. The “New Row” button may be used to override timing considerations, and/or to compensate for inconsistent scanning speed.

FIG. 3B is a flow diagram of a method for mapping samples to strings according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure. In one or more embodiments, the method of FIG. 3B, or one or more steps thereof, may be performed by one or more computing devices or entities. For example, portions of the method of FIG. 3B may be performed by components of a computer system. The method of FIG. 3B, or one or more steps thereof, may be embodied in computer-executable instructions that are stored in a computer-readable medium, such as a non-transitory computer-readable medium. The steps in the method of FIG. 3B might not all be performed in the order specified and some steps may be omitted or changed in order.

Reference is now made to FIG. 3B, which shows an illustrative implementation for grouping device measurements into rows. For example, the steps described in FIG. 3B may be performed at step 132, described above in FIG. 2A. According to this illustrative embodiment, each row of the installation may be processed such that the distance and/or angle between scanned devices may be compared to a reference distance and/or angle. The scanning device may be configured to determine and/or estimate a global position at the time of each scan, by utilizing localization systems such as Global Positioning System (GPS). At step 315, the estimated distance and/or angle between each pair of scanned devices may be calculated. At step 325, the estimated distance and/or angle between scanned devices may be compared to a reference and/or a threshold. In some embodiments the reference may be predefined, while in other embodiments the reference may be derived from calculated distances (e.g., the reference may be the average distance between consecutive scans, with a threshold twenty percent longer than the reference, or the reference may be derived from the angles between consecutive scans, with an appropriate threshold).

At step 335, the distance and/or angle between two devices, which may have been scanned consecutively, are compared to the reference distance and/or angle. If, at step 335, it is determined that the distance and/or angle are above the threshold, the two devices may be mapped to different rows, or strings, at step 345. If, at step 335, it is determined that the distance and/or angle are below the threshold, the two devices may be mapped to a same row, or string, at step 355. Alternatively, or in addition to the method described above, the installer may be instructed to press a “New Row” button on his or her device between rows, which may indicate him or her completing the scanning of one row and beginning another. The “New Row” button may be used to override distance and/or angle considerations, and/or to compensate for inconsistent distances and/or angles between devices in the same row.

Reference is now made to FIG. 4, which depicts one illustrative embodiment of representing a Non-Identifying Map (NIM). Generation of a representation of an NIM may be included in installation mapping methods including steps such as step 100 from FIG. 1, which is described above. A

PV installation may be represented as a text file which contains information regarding the installation. For example, an NIM may be represented by a text file which lists the rows in the installation, the number of devices in each row, and/or the distance between each pair of devices. Additional information such as absolute locations of some devices, row orientation, angles and distances between rows, or other information may be included in the NIM. The mapping method may include an appropriate parser to parse the text file and extract information from the NIM to compare the scanned information to the NIM layout.

FIG. 5A is a flow-chart of generating a Non-Identifying Map. In one or more embodiments, the method of FIG. 5A, or one or more steps thereof, may be performed by one or more computing devices or entities. For example, portions of the method of FIG. 5A may be performed by components of a computer system. The method of FIG. 5A, or one or more steps thereof, may be embodied in computer-executable instructions that are stored in a computer-readable medium, such as a non-transitory computer-readable medium. The steps in the method of FIG. 5 might not all be performed in the order specified and some steps may be omitted or changed in order.

FIG. 5A, depicts an illustrative embodiment of generation and representation of a Non-Identifying Map (NIM). For example, the steps described in FIG. 5A may be performed during the method described in FIG. 1. A program or application may be used to design and plan a PV installation. The program may run on appropriate platforms (PCs, tablets, smartphones, servers, etc.), and may be made available to installers and/or system designers. The program may include a Graphic User interface (GUI) to facilitate in site planning. At step 101, the site planner or designer may use the program or application to design a PV installation using the tools made available by the application. For example, FIG. 5B illustrates an example of a user interface for PV installation mapping that may be used at step 101 of FIG. 5A to design the PV installation. A user may design a PV installation featuring a plurality of photovoltaic generators 501 (e.g. PV panels, PV modules, PV cells, strings or substrings of PV panels) and featuring one or more power converters (e.g. PV inverter 502).

At step 102, of FIG. 5A, a binary file may be generated comprising information describing a portion of or the full layout of the system. The binary file may be generated at step 102 after a layout of the PV installation has been designed using the program GUI. Embodiments of the PV installation mapping methods described herein may include a step 103 of reading the binary file generated at step 102 and extracting site layout information from the binary file.

Reference is now made to FIG. 6, which shows components for scanning a PV device and logging the time and/or location of the scanner at the time of scanning. PV device 602 (e.g. PV panel, optimization device, DC/DC converter, inverter, monitoring device, communication device, etc.) may be marked with an ID marker 600 that can be scanned or processed, ID marker 600 may be a barcode that can be scanned by a scanning device. ID marker 600 may be a serial number identifiable by a camera, such as a camera with digit-identification capabilities. ID marker 600 may be an RFID tag, or a memory device readable by an electronic circuit. It should be understood that any other type of marker may be used in addition to or instead of the listed examples.

Scanning and localization device 601 may capture or record data provided by the ID marker 600. For example, the device 601 may be configured to obtain the identifying information from PV device 602, by scanning, taking a

picture of, or retrieving data stored by the ID marker **600**. Device **601** may include a clock and memory device, and be configured to store the timestamp of each scan along with the identifying information of the device scanned at that time. Device **601** may include a localization device such as a GPS device, configured to communicate with satellites **603** and estimate the location of the device at the time of scanning. In one implementation, the GPS methods employed may allow for estimates with sufficient accuracy to provide differentiation between adjacent PV devices deployed in the same installation.

Reference is now made to FIG. 7, which shows examples of scanning and locating devices that can be used in conjunction with illustrative embodiments described herein. Combined device **700** may include one or more of the illustrated components. ID reader **203** may be configured to retrieve identifying information from a PV device. In some embodiments, ID reader **203** may comprise a camera, and may be configured to take a photograph of a serial number or other identifying information on the PV device. In some embodiments, ID reader **203** may comprise a barcode scanner and be configured to scan a barcode on the PV device. In some embodiments, ID reader **203** may comprise an electronic circuit configured to read an RFID tag or a memory device storing identifying information.

In some embodiments, the device **700** may include GPS device **201**, configured to receive or determine a GPS location, for example, when scanning a PV device. The device **700** may write (e.g. record, store, transmit, etc.) the ID information and GPS coordinates to data logging device **202**. The data logging device **202** may comprise flash memory, EEPROM, or other memory devices.

Controller **205** may synchronize the various components comprising device **700**. The controller **205** may comprise a DSP, MCU, ASIC, FPGA, and/or a different control unit. The controller may be split into several control units, each responsible for different components. Device **700** may include communication device **206**. The communication device **206** may be configured to communicate using a wireless technology such as ZigBee, Bluetooth, cellular protocols, and/or other communication protocols. In some embodiments, measurements, timestamps and/or ID information may be transmitted, for example, by the communication device **206**, to a remote server and/or stored to memory at a remote location. Device **700** may include clock **204**, configured to sample, store, and/or communicate the time (in conjunction with the memory device and/or communication devices). For example, the clock **204** may be used to record a timestamp each time the ID reader **203** determines (e.g. obtains, measures, etc.) a device ID.

Device **700** may further include tilt sensor **207**, configured to measure the tilt of the device **700** and store the measurement to memory and/or communicate the measurement. The tilt sensor may be used to measure the tilt of PV devices such as PV panel. Scanning device **700** may also include a compass **208**. The compass **208** may be configured to measure or determine the direction a PV module is facing. For example, the compass **208** may be used to measure a direction of a PV module when a tilt measurement is carried out. Determining the tilt of one or more PV panels and/or the direction that the one or more PV panels face may be useful for various applications, such as monitoring applications or mapping applications. If the tilt of the PV panels is fixed during deployment, the installer may want to measure tilt and angle while scanning the PV devices for mapping purposes. The scanned data may be uploaded to a remote monitoring device.

In some embodiments, a device such as mobile phone/tablet **710** may include some or all of the functionality described with regard to combined device **700**. Combined device **700** may also include a screen, configured to display the information generated by the device. In one implementation, the screen may display information in real-time, which may allow the installer to monitor progress, and may improve scanning accuracy. Many mobile devices include ID readers such as barcode scanners or a camera, a GPS device, controller, communication methods, a clock, compass and tilt sensor. Application software may be downloaded to the mobile device to allow the different components to interact in a way that achieves the desired functions described herein with regard to mapping PV installations. The mobile device may allow the installation map to be displayed on the device's screen while scanning, and show real-time updating of the information attached to each PV device in the field, to aid the installer in determining that the information is being processed accurately and clearly.

FIG. 8A is a flow diagram of a method for installation mapping according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure. In one or more embodiments, the method of FIG. 8A, or one or more steps thereof, may be performed by one or more computing devices or entities. For example, portions of the method of FIG. 8A may be performed by components of a computer system. The method of FIG. 8A, or one or more steps thereof, may be embodied in computer-executable instructions that are stored in a computer-readable medium, such as a non-transitory computer-readable medium. The steps in the method of FIG. 8A might not all be performed in the order specified and some steps may be omitted or changed in order.

Reference is now made to FIG. 8A, which shows an illustrative method for estimating relative positions of a plurality of PV devices with regard to one another. In one implementation, the position may be estimated, or determined, without the use of localization devices, such as satellites. All or a portion of the PV devices in a PV installation may be equipped with a communication device, such as a wireless transceiver running an appropriate wireless protocol (e.g. Bluetooth, ZigBee, Wi-Fi, LTE, GSM, UMTS, CDMA etc.) or a Power-Line Communication (PLC) transceiver, which may be coupled to the PV installation's cables and configured to communicate by sending messages to each other over the cables.

At step **800**, a mapping algorithm may be initialized by assigning random locations to each of the PV devices that are to be mapped. In one implementation, one or more of the devices may begin communicating by broadcasting an ID number, the current timestamp, and/or other information over the communication medium (e.g. power cables, wireless channels). For example, the ID number, timestamp, or other information may be transmitted at a predetermined amplitude. All or a portion of the devices may be able to detect the ID signals that are broadcast by the other devices. The received signal strength and/or the time it takes for the signal to propagate from one device to the next may depend on the distance and signal attenuation between the devices. In some embodiments, the devices may engage in one-way communication only, i.e. each device might only send messages to some or all of the other devices without being configured to receive a response from any particular device(s). In some embodiments, two or more devices may engage in two-way communication (e.g. Device A sends a message to Device B requesting a response, and measures the elapsed time between sending the message and receiving the response).

At step **805**, the signal strength of each signal received by each device and/or the time delay between sending and receiving messages may be measured. At step **810** the signal strength and/or time delay measured at step **805** may be used to generate one or more initial estimates of pairwise distances between devices. The initial estimates may comprise error, such as error due to stochastic attenuation factors, noisy channels, and/or unexpected delays in signal propagation. In one implementation, multiple measurements may be taken and then averaged, or some other function may be applied to the measurements. In this implementation, an initial accuracy of the measurements may be improved by taking multiple measurements.

At step **815**, the initial distance estimates generated at step **810** may be input to an algorithm, which may analyze the initial pairwise distance estimates and use them to generate an Estimated Layout Map (ELM). Many algorithms for this step may be considered, and in some embodiments, combinations of algorithms may offer accurate results. For example, a Least Squares (LS) problem may be formulated to create an ELM which minimizes the disparity between the pairwise estimated distances between various devices. A myriad of other methods, such as simulated annealing, Convex Optimization, Semidefinite Programming, or Multidimensional Scaling can be combined with transliteration and/or triangulation techniques to obtain an estimated layout based on the measurements.

At step **820**, it may be determined whether a non-identifying map (NIM) is available. If a NIM is available, the method may proceed to step **840**. At step **840**, the NIM and ELM may be input to a matching algorithm which may incorporate elements of the method illustrated in FIG. **2A**, and further discussed in FIGS. **2B-D**, to match the identifying information incorporated in the ELM to the device locations described by the NIM. At step **845** the matching algorithm may run, i.e., execute, and at step **850** a map of the installation may be output which outlines the device locations along with ID information for each device. The map may be in a format viewable on an appropriate device, such as a computer monitor, mobile phone, tablet, etc. The map may be represented digitally or in a textual format.

Alternatively, if no NIM is available at step **820**, the algorithm may proceed to step **825**. At step **825** the method may seek “anchor devices”, i.e., a set of one or more specific devices which have known locations. If such anchors exist (or can be easily obtained by the installer), certain device IDs from the ELM may be matched to the known locations at step **835**, and the rest of the devices may be arranged around them, with the final arrangement then output at step **850**. If no anchor devices exist or can be obtained, the algorithm may use the current solution without further modification at step **830**, proceed from step to step **850**, and output the ELM “as is”, as a final map of the installation with ID information for each device. The method of FIG. **5A** may be carried out by a centralized processing device which has access to the measurements taken by some or all of the PV devices (e.g., a system inverter including a processing unit, communicatively coupled to the PV devices so that the devices can communicate their measurements to the inverter).

Reference is now made to FIG. **8B**, which illustrates different stages of the mapping algorithm depicted in FIG. **8A** according to a certain illustrative embodiment. In this illustrative embodiment, for illustrative purposes, step **815** comprises two stages. The first stage may include utilizing a mesh-relaxation technique, such as described in “Relaxation on a Mesh: a Formalism for Generalized Localization”

by A. Howard, M. J. Mataric and G. Sukhatme (*Proceedings of the IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS 2001)*), with the result of the first stage being formulated as a Least-Squares problem and input to a Least-Squares solving method (many of which can be found online, such as the “leastsq” method packaged in the SciPy library for the Python programming language). **870** depicts the real layout of the PV installation, with each device numbered (0-119) and located in its “real” place. The real layout depicted in **870** is not known to the algorithm at the time of running, and is provided here for illustrative purposes. **880** depicts an example result of step **800**, where the mapping algorithm has generated random location estimates for each device. In this illustrative embodiment, RSSI indicators (in conjunction with estimated random signal attenuation factors) are used to estimate pairwise distances between each pair of devices, and the estimates are input to an implementation of the “Relaxation on a Mesh” method mentioned above, at a first stage of step **815**. The resultant ELM is depicted in **890**, which includes some misaligned rows and a few devices which deviate from their “real” location illustrated in **870**. The estimate depicted in **890** may then be input to the SciPy “leastsq” function, and a final, smooth, accurate ELM may be output, such as the output depicted in **895**. It should be noted that the diamond-like shape of the ELM of **895** is obtained because of unequally scaled X and Y axes. For example, if the axes in **L4** were scaled equally, the shape may be that of a rectangle, which may be similar to the real installation as illustrated in **L1**. In one implementation the ELM **895** illustrates an estimate at the end of step **815**. In the example illustrated in FIG. **8B**, the degree of symmetry present in the installation may reduce accuracy of the estimated layout. In certain instances, a PV installation may include asymmetrical elements (e.g. some rows being shorter than other, such as in the system depicted in FIG. **2B**) which may improve accuracy when matching ELM elements to NIM elements. In certain instances, asymmetrical elements may result in improvements in algorithmic convergence and accuracy.

Reference is now made to FIG. **9**, which shows an illustrative PV installation comprising PV devices which may be described on a map of the installation. The installation may include a plurality of PV strings **916a**, **916b**, to **916n**. The PV strings may be connected in parallel. Each PV string **916a-n** may include a plurality of PV devices **903**. PV devices **903** may be PV cells or panels, power converters (e.g. DC/DC converters or DC/AC converters) coupled to or embedded on PV panels, monitoring devices, sensors, safety devices (e.g. fuse boxes, RCDs), relays, and the like, or any combinations thereof. Individual PV devices **903** may be identical or might be different. The PV devices **903** may be coupled in series or in parallel. For example, each PV device **903** may comprise a DC/DC converter or DC/AC inverter coupled to a PV panel and configured to operate the panel at a set or determined power point, such as a maximum power point. Each DC/DC or DC/AC converter may convert input PV power to a low-voltage, high-current output, and multiple converters may be serially connected to form a string having high voltage. In some embodiments, each PV device **903** may include DC/DC or DC/AC converter converting input PV power to a high-voltage, low-current output, and multiple converters may be connected in parallel to form a string having high current.

The plurality of PV strings **916a-n**, which may be connected in parallel, may be coupled to the inputs of PV system grouping device **904**. In some embodiments, PV system grouping device **904** may comprise a central inverter con-

figured to convert a DC input to an AC output. The AC output may be coupled to a power grid. In some embodiments, PV system grouping device **904** may comprise one or more safety, monitoring and/or communication devices. Each of the PV devices **903** and/or the grouping device **904** may include an ID tag such as a barcode, serial number and/or memory or RFID card, that comprises identifying information.

In illustrative embodiments, it may be possible to match device IDs to physical locations on a map by utilizing various methods described herein. In some embodiments, it may be possible to match device IDs to physical locations on a map by determining which devices are coupled serially to one another (i.e. which devices comprise each string), determining the order of the various strings and then determining the order of the devices within each string.

FIG. **10** is a flow diagram of a method for grouping power devices into groups according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure. In one or more embodiments, the method of FIG. **10**, or one or more steps thereof, may be performed by one or more computing devices or entities. For example, portions of the method of FIG. **10** may be performed by components of a computer system. The method of FIG. **10**, or one or more steps thereof, may be embodied in computer-executable instructions that are stored in a computer-readable medium, such as a non-transitory computer-readable medium. The steps in the method of FIG. **10** might not all be performed in the order specified and some steps may be omitted or changed in order.

Reference is now made to FIG. **10**, which depicts a method for grouping PV devices into strings. The method may be used to determine which devices are serially connected to one another in systems such as the system depicted in FIG. **9**. The method of FIG. **10**, or one or more steps thereof, may be used to group devices into map rows, such as at step **132** of FIG. **2A**. The method may apply to a plurality of PV devices which are able to change their output voltage, such as DC/DC converters, and report their output parameters (e.g. voltage, current) to a system management unit communicatively coupled to some or all the PV devices.

At step **900**, it may be determined that one or more power devices are ungrouped. For example, initially, all power devices may be ungrouped. At step **910**, a power device may be selected from the ungrouped power devices. The power device may be selected randomly. For example, an optimizer, such as an optimizer coupled to a power generation source, may be selected. In one implementation, all or portions of step **910** may be performed by an inverter. At step **920**, the power device selected at **910** may be instructed to decrease or increase an output voltage of the power device. For example, a message may be sent to the power device, via PLC, wirelessly, or via other communications methods, to increase or decrease the output voltage of the power device.

At step **930**, the method may wait for power devices, such as ungrouped power devices, to report operating points. For example, the power devices may send telemetries based on a schedule or at various intervals. At step **940**, operating points received from power devices, such as ungrouped power devices may be recorded. The operating points may be responsive to the increase or decrease in output voltage that was requested at step **920**.

At step **950**, one or more devices that do not report a change in voltage may be grouped with the power device selected at step **910**. For example, devices that do not report a change in voltage greater than a threshold change in voltage may be grouped with the selected power device. The

threshold may be preset or predetermined, or determined based on received operating points.

At step **960**, it may be determined whether there are one or more ungrouped devices. If there are one or more ungrouped devices, the method may return to step **910** and select one of the one or more ungrouped devices. Otherwise, if at step **960** it is determined that all devices have been grouped, the method may proceed to step **970**. At step **970**, the grouping may be considered complete, and the division of devices into groups may be output.

As an example of the method described in FIG. **10**, assume PV system grouping device **904** is an inverter including a power-line-communications (PLC) or wireless transceiver and a processor, and each PV device is an optimizer including a DC/DC converter, a maximum-power-point-tracking (MPPT) circuit and a PLC or wireless transceiver. Each optimizer may be coupled to one or more power generation sources such as PV panels, batteries and/or wind turbines. Before the grouping process begins, each optimizer may be configured to output a certain low, safe voltage such as 1V. Since the strings of optimizers (e.g. **316a**, **316b**) are coupled in parallel, they will maintain a common voltage between the two ends of each string. The optimizers may periodically send telemetries to the PV system grouping device **904** using PLC, where they report their current output voltages. At step **900**, the power devices (optimizers in this example) are ungrouped. At step **910**, the inverter chooses a first optimizer at random (e.g. Optimizer A, belonging to String F), and at step **920** sends a message (via PLC or wirelessly) instructing Optimizer A to increase its output DC voltage. This increase in voltage results in a corresponding increase in the voltage of the string including the chosen optimizer, String F. To maintain a common string voltage, the optimizers belonging to all the other strings may increase their voltages as well. However, the optimizers which are part of String F (e.g. Optimizers B-K) might not increase their output voltage, as Optimizer A has already raised its voltage. When the optimizers next send telemetries to the inverter, via PLC or wirelessly, at step **930**, Optimizer A will report a high voltage, Optimizers B-K will report the same voltage as before, and all other optimizers will report increases in voltage. At step **940**, the inverter processor will record the reports from all the optimizers. At step **950**, the inverter will determine that all optimizers not reporting a significant change in voltage (B-K) belong to the same string as the originally selected optimizer (A), group them as a string and remove them from the “ungrouped power devices pool”. The algorithm then repeats steps **910-50** until all optimizers have been grouped, at which stage it comes to an end, at step **970** outputting the division of optimizers into groups.

Reference is now made to FIG. **11A**, which shows an illustrative embodiment of a PV string of PV devices, where it may be possible to determine the order of the devices within the string. Time Domain Reflectometry (TDR) may be used to determine the ordering of PV devices within a PV string. String **317** may comprise a plurality of serially-connected PV devices **104**, such as PV devices **104a**, **104b**, to **104k**. The string **317** may comprise any number of PV devices **104a-k**. Devices **104a-k** may comprise elements similar to those previously discussed with regard to PV devices **903**. Devices **104a-k** may each include power converter **210** (e.g. a DC/DC or DC/AC converter) which receives input from a PV panel, battery or other form of energy generation, and produces an output. One output of converter **210** may be coupled to a variable impedance Z , and the other output may serve as the device output, to be

17

coupled to an adjacent PV device in string **317**. In this manner, string **317** may include a plurality of variable impedances which are coupled to the cables which couple the PV devices to one another, forming the serial string. Each PV device **104a-k** may include a controller **220**, configured to control the value of variable impedance *Z*. Controller **220** may be the same controller used to control the other components of PV device **104a-k** (e.g. power converter **210**, communication module **230**, safety device(s) **240**, auxiliary power **250**, etc.), or it may be a different controller. Transceiver **115** may be coupled to the string **317**, and may be configured to inject a voltage or current pulse over the string and measure the reflected wave. The transceiver may be coupled to one of the edges of the string, or may be coupled to a middle point between two devices. According to TDR theory, the waveform reflected back to the transceiver depends on the characteristic impedance of the PV string line. The characteristic impedance of the PV string may be affected by each of the variable impedances coupled to it, so by rapidly changing the variable impedance on one of the serially connected PV devices, a rapidly changing reflected waveform may be formed.

Reference is now made to FIG. **11B**, which shows several examples of variable impedance configurations. Variable impedance **1110** may include inductor **L1**, resistor **R1**, capacitor **C1** and switch **Q1** (e.g. a MOSFET), all connected in parallel. When switch **Q1** is ON (e.g. by a controller applying an appropriate voltage to the gate of MOSFET) the total impedance of impedance **1110** may be zero, since the switch bypasses the other impedance elements. When switch **Q1** is off, the impedance of **1110** may be nonzero, and may be calculated as the impedance of the other three components connected in parallel. Variable impedance **1120** may comprise inductor **L2**, resistor **R2**, capacitor **C2** connected in parallel, inductor **L22** coupled to them in series, and switch **Q2** connected in parallel to the whole arrangement. Here, when **Q2** is ON the equivalent impedance of **1120** may be zero, and when it is OFF the impedance of **1120** may be nonzero, and calculated as the impedance of **R2**, **C2** and **L2** in parallel added to the impedance of **L22**. Variable impedance **1130** features two switches, **Q3** and **Q33**, and more than two impedance levels. When **Q3** is ON, the impedance of **1130** is zero. When **Q3** and **Q33** are both OFF, the impedance of **1130** is simply the impedance of inductor **L3**. When **Q3** is OFF and **Q33** is ON, the impedance of **1130** is the equivalent impedance of inductor **L3**, resistor **R3** and capacitor **C3** all coupled in parallel. Obviously, many more arrangements of components may be utilized for different (or additional) impedance levels. The switching of the switches (**Q1**, **Q2**, **Q3**, **Q33**) may be controlled by an appropriate controller (e.g. DSP, MCU, FPGA etc.) within the relevant PV device.

Reference is now made to FIG. **12**, which shows a waveform reflected from a PV string including variable impedances, according to illustrative embodiments described herein. If illustrative variable impedances are switched at a very high frequency (e.g. a frequency above 100 kHz, such as hundreds of kilohertz, several megahertz, tens or hundreds of megahertz, or several gigahertz), a ripple may be detected on the wave reflected back to the transceiver. If several variable impedances are varied on the same string, the ripple each impedance causes may appear at a different time, due to the difference in distance between impedances. For example, if two PV devices including variable loads are spaced 1.5 meters apart, with one of the PV devices being 1.5 meters closer to the transceiver than the other, the waveform transmitted by the transceiver will

18

travel an additional 1.5 meters to reach the further PV device, and the reflected wave will travel an additional 1.5 meters as well on the way back, for a total difference of 3 meters in the route. Assuming the waveforms travel at the speed of light, $C=3 \cdot 10^8$ m/sec, the ripple caused by the farther variable impedance will appear

$$\Delta t = \frac{3[\text{m}]}{3 \cdot 10^8 \left[\frac{\text{m}}{\text{sec}} \right]} = 10[\text{ns}]$$

later than the ripple caused by the closer variable impedance. High-quality digital or analog sensors may be able to detect time differences at this resolution. For example, if transceiver **115** commands device **104b** to vary its impedance, it may detect a ripple appearing on the reflected waveform after 200 [ns]. If transceiver **115** commands device **104a** to vary its impedance, and it detects a ripple appearing on the reflecting waveform after 210 [ns], it may determine that device **104a** is 1.5 [m] further than device **104b**. By iteratively sending similar commands to each device in the system, the transceiver unit may be able to determine the relative distances of each PV device, and in conjunction with grouping the devices into strings and/or rows (using methods such as the illustrative embodiments shown in FIG. **10**), the location of each device may be determined.

FIG. **13** is a flow diagram of a method for testing power devices according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure. In one or more embodiments, the method of FIG. **13**, or one or more steps thereof, may be performed by one or more computing devices or entities. For example, portions of the method of FIG. **13** may be performed by components of a computer system. The method of FIG. **13**, or one or more steps thereof, may be embodied in computer-executable instructions that are stored in a computer-readable medium, such as a non-transitory computer-readable medium. The steps in the method of FIG. **13** might not all be performed in the order specified and some steps may be omitted or changed in order.

Reference is now made to FIG. **13**, which described an illustrative method which may be used to determine the relative distances of serially connected PV devices from a waveform-generating transceiver, in a system which may be arranged similarly to the system shown in FIG. **11A**. At step **1320**, one or more power devices may be defined as “untested”, i.e., they have not been commanded to vary their impedance. For example, initially, all power devices may be determined to be untested.

At step **1325**, one of the untested devices is selected. For example, an untested device may be selected randomly at step **1325**. At step **1330**, the device selected at step **1325** may be commanded to vary its variable impedance. For example, the device may be commanded to vary its variable impedance at a determined frequency, such as a high frequency. At step **1335**, a transceiver may transmit a voltage pulse over the PV string. At step **1340**, the transceiver may receive the reflected wave, record and/or time the response, and save the received or determined data to memory at step **1345**. At step **1350**, the selected device may be removed from the pool of “untested” devices, and may be commanded, for example, by the transceiver, to stop varying its output. At step **1355**, the transceiver may check or determine if there are devices in the string which are untested. If there are untested devices, the method may return to step **1325**, and another power device may be selected. If it is determined, at step **1355**, that

all power devices have been tested, the method may proceed to step 1360. At step 1360 the transceiver (or a master control unit or other system which receives data from the transceiver) may analyze the saved reflected waveforms and time samples, determine (as explained previously) which devices are closer than others, and estimate the distances between devices.

Reference is now made to FIG. 14, which shows an illustrative PV arrangement. In PV arrangement 309, PV devices 105a, 105b, to 105k are coupled in parallel to one another. Although not illustrated in FIG. 14, the devices 105a-k may be coupled in parallel to a system power device such as an inverter, management and/or communication unit, safety device(s), or other devices. Each PV device 105a-k may be coupled to a power source (e.g. PV panel, battery, wind turbine etc.) and may include a DC/DC or DC/AC converter configured to output a high-voltage DC or AC voltage which is common to all PV devices 105a-k coupled in parallel. In this illustrative system, devices 105a-k might not be coupled in series with one another. Transceiver 116 may be coupled to the PV devices 105a-k and may be configured to communicate with the devices 105a-k. It may be desirable for the system installer to know the distances between the various devices and the transceiver, or to know the distance ordering (i.e. which device 105a-k is closest, which is the farthest, etc.). In parallel-connected embodiments, a voltage or current pulse may be transmitted, with the PV devices 105a-k taking turns varying their impedance as instructed by the transceiver 116, as explained above in regards to FIGS. 11A-14. In this embodiment, the transceiver 116 may analyze the current returning wave for disturbances caused by the varying impedance circuits, and based on the time delay in recording caused by each PV device, determine and/or list the devices 105a-k in order of distance from the transceiver 116.

Reference is now made to FIG. 15A, which depicts a PV device according to illustrative embodiments. PV panel 106 may include one or more solar cells on one side (not explicitly shown), and a lower portion of a junction box 152 on a second side. A plurality of panel conductors 153 such as ribbon wires may be coupled to the PV cells on one side of the panel, and may protrude through slots in the lower junction box portion 152 on the other side. The lower junction box portion 152 may be fastened to the PV panel 106 at the time of manufacturing. An identification label (ID label) 151 may be attached to the panel 106 or lower junction box portion 152 either at the time of manufacturing or thereafter. The ID label 151 may be a barcode, serial number, RFID tag, memory device or any other medium for containing information that can be read by an external device. An upper junction box portion 150 may be mechanically attachable to the lower junction box portion, and may include electronic circuits configured to receive PV power from the conductors 153, and may include string conductors 154 for coupling the upper portion to adjacent PV devices. In some embodiments, the upper junction box portion 150 may be coupled to other upper box portions at the time of manufacturing, using conductors of appropriate length to allow a plurality of upper portions 150 to be attached to a plurality of lower junction box portions during deployment in a PV installation. The upper junction box portion 150 may include an appropriate device for reading the ID label 151 from the panel or lower junction box portion. For example, if the ID label 151 includes a barcode, the upper portion 150 may include a barcode scanner. If the ID label 151 includes a serial number, the upper portion 150 may include a camera and be coupled to a device configured to identify digits

and/or letters. The upper portion 150 may include an RFID tag reader, or a device configured to read identifying information from a memory device. The upper portion 150 may read, process and/or communicate the ID information automatically when attached to the lower junction box portion 152. The upper junction box portion 150 may also be configured with its own ID information, and be able to communicate to a management device both its own ID tag and the ID label of the PV panel it is coupled to.

PV device ID tags may be used for several purposes. In some embodiments, the ID tags may be used to create a map of the PV installation including the locations of specific devices in the installation. In some embodiments, the tags may be used to authenticate PV devices and ensure that approved devices are used in the installation, for example, by using an authentication protocol. In some embodiments, the protocol may be carried out by circuits and/or devices comprised in the upper part of the junction box. In some embodiments, the ID tag may be communicated to an external management device, and an authentication protocol may be carried out between components included in the lower portion, the upper portion and an external device or management unit.

Reference is now made to FIG. 15B, which shows an illustrative embodiment of an upper portion of a junction box, such as the one that may be used in the arrangement depicted in FIG. 15A. Upper junction box portion 150 may comprise power converter 245, which may be configured to receive DC power from a PV panel and convert it to DC or AC power at the converter outputs. Upper junction box portion 150 may comprise variable load 275. Upper junction box portion 150 may comprise an ID reader 285. Upper junction box portion 150 may further comprise controller 270 such as a microprocessor, Digital Signal Processor (DSP) and/or an FPGA, configured to control some or all of the other functional blocks. In some embodiments, the controller may be split into multiple control units, each configured to control one or more of the functional blocks of upper portion 150. Upper junction box portion 150 may comprise Maximum Power Point Tracking (MPPT) circuit 295, which may be configured to extract power, such as a maximized power, from the PV module the upper portion 150 is coupled to. In some embodiments, controller 270 may include MPPT functionality, and thus MPPT circuit 295 may not be included in the upper portion 150. Controller 270 may control and/or communicate with other elements over common bus 290. In some embodiments, the upper junction box portion may include circuitry and/or sensors 280 configured to measure parameters on or near a PV module or junction box, such as voltage, current, power, irradiance and/or temperature. In some embodiments, the upper junction box may include communication device 255, configured to transmit and/or receive data and/or commands from other devices. Communication device 255 may communicate using Power Line Communication (PLC) technology, or wireless technologies such as ZigBee, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, cellular communication or other wireless methods. In some embodiments, the upper junction box portion may include safety devices 260 (e.g. fuses, circuit breakers and Residual Current Detectors). The various components included in upper junction box portion 150 may communicate and/or share data over common bus 290.

FIG. 16 is a flow diagram of a method for grouping power devices into strings. The method may be used to determine which devices are serially connected to one another in systems such as the system depicted in FIG. 9. The method of FIG. 16, or one or more steps thereof, may be used to

group devices into map rows, such as at step 132 of FIG. 2A. The method may apply to a plurality of power devices which are able to report their output parameters (e.g. voltage, current) to a system management unit communicatively coupled to some or all of the power devices. According to Kirchhoff's Current Law (KCL), serially coupled devices carry the same current. According to KCL, if a plurality of serially-coupled power devices repeatedly report their output current to a system management unit at substantially simultaneous times, the reported currents may be substantially the same in magnitude. By logging the reported currents over a period of time, it may be determined which power devices are unlikely to be serially coupled to one another (e.g. if two devices report currents which are significantly different at substantially the same time, they are likely not serially coupled) and by a process of elimination and application of an appropriate stopping condition, an accurate estimate of the arrangement of power devices in a PV system may be obtained.

At step 160, initial grouping possibilities may be considered. For example, each power device may be considered to be "possibly paired" to each other power device in the system. In some embodiments, more limiting initial possibilities may be considered based on prior knowledge. For example, it may be known that two power devices are not serially coupled to one another, and they may be initially considered "not paired." In some embodiments, a counter may be optionally set to track the number of iterations the method has run. At step 161, the method may receive current measurements from two or more power devices at substantially the same time.

At step 162, some of the current measurements may be compared to one another. For example, if Device A and Device B are considered "possibly paired" at step 162 of the method, the current measurements of Device A and Device B, I_A and I_B , respectively, may be compared to each other. If the current measurements are not substantially the same, the estimated relationship between Device A and Device B may be changed to "not paired." In some embodiments, more than one instance of substantially different currents may be required to change an estimated relationship to "not paired." For example, Device A and Device B may be considered "possibly paired" until three pairs of substantially different current measurements have been reported. In some embodiments, the determination of whether currents are substantially the same is based on an absolute current difference. For example, if $|I_A - I_B| \leq \epsilon$ for an appropriate ϵ (e.g. 10 mA, or 100 mA, or 1 A), then I_A and I_B might be considered "substantially the same." In some embodiments, the determination of whether currents are substantially the same is based on a relative current difference. For example, if

$$\frac{|I_A - I_B|}{I_B} < \alpha \text{ and } \frac{|I_A - I_B|}{I_A} < \alpha$$

for an appropriate α (e.g. 0.01, or 0.03, or 0.1) then I_A and I_B might be considered substantially the same. In some embodiments, multiple criteria may be used to determine if two currents are substantially the same.

By comparing pairs of current measurements to each other as detailed above, it may be determined which devices are unlikely to be serially coupled to one another. In some embodiments, the method may compare current measurements of each pair of power devices considered "possibly paired," and based on the result of the comparison, the

method may change the relationship between the pair of power devices to "not paired." In some embodiments, the method may compare only a portion of the current measurements to one another. In some embodiments, some or all the current measurements selected for comparison may be chosen at random.

At step 163, the method determines if a stop condition has been reached. In some embodiments, a stop condition may be reached when a certain number of iterations have been completed. The number of iterations which trigger the stop condition may be fixed (e.g. 10, 50, or 100), or may depend on the number of power devices in the system (e.g. $N/10$, $N/2$ or \sqrt{N} for a system containing N power devices). In some embodiments, the stop condition may be triggered when a certain number of iterations have not changed the relationship between any two power devices. For example, if three method iterations have not changed the relationship between any two devices to "not paired," the stop condition may be reached. In some embodiments, the stop condition may be reached when each power device is considered "possibly paired" to no more than a certain number of other devices. For example, a stop condition may be reached if each power device is considered "possibly paired" to no more than twenty devices, or forty devices, or sixty devices. In some embodiments, a stop condition is reached based on a combination of criteria. For example, a stop condition may be reached only if three method iterations have not changed the relationship between any two devices to "not paired," and additionally, each power device is considered "possibly paired" to no more than fifty devices.

If the method determines that the stop condition has not been reached, at step 165 the iteration counter may be incremented, and the method may return to step 161. If the method determines that the stop condition has been reached, the method may continue to step 164, and for each Power Device X, output the group of power devices that are considered "possibly paired" to Power Device X (i.e. the "potential group" of Power Device X).

Reference is now made to FIG. 17A, which shows an illustrative embodiment of a PV string of PV devices, where it may be possible to determine the order of the devices within the string. Selective coupling of PV devices to a common ground may result in leakage current, which may be used to determine the ordering of PV devices within a PV string. String 318 may comprise a plurality of serially-connected PV devices 107, such as PV devices 107a, 107b, to 107k. The string 318 may comprise any number of PV devices 107a-k. The string may be coupled between a ground terminal and a power bus. The voltage between the terminals of each PV device may vary from device to device. For example, in the illustrative embodiment depicted in FIG. 17A, PV device 107a outputs 25V, PV device 107b outputs 30V ($55V - 25V = 30V$), and PV device 107k outputs 39.3V ($700 - 660.7V = 39.3V$). The string voltage may be the sum of the voltages output by each PV device in the string, with the power bus being at voltage approximately equal to the string voltage.

Devices 107a-k may comprise elements similar to those previously discussed with regard to PV devices 903 and/or 104. Some elements have not been explicitly illustrated. Devices 107a-k may each include power converter 211 (e.g. a DC/DC or DC/AC converter) which receives input from a PV panel, battery or other form of energy generation, and produces an output. The converter may include two output terminals for serial coupling to adjacent PV devices in string 318. One output of converter 211 may further be coupled to a leakage circuit 108 at leakage terminal LT. Leakage circuit

108 may be variously configured. In an illustrative embodiment such as shown in FIG. **17A**, leakage circuit **108** may comprise a serial branch including resistor **R**, switch **Q** and current-sensor **A1**. The serial branch may be coupled to a common electrical ground. In some PV installations, the mounting structures used to support PV panels may be required to be coupled to a common ground, and in such embodiments, the leakage branch may be coupled to the ground via the mounting structures. In some embodiments, alternative grounding points may be considered. Resistor **R** may be of large resistance, such as 10 kΩ, 100 kΩ or even 1MΩ or larger. Switch **Q** may be implemented using an appropriate device such as a MOSFET. During regular operating conditions, switch **Q** may be in the OFF position, disconnecting leakage terminal **LT** from the grounding point. Switch **Q** may be temporarily be switched to ON, allowing current to flow from the leakage terminal **LT** to the ground. In some embodiments, where switch **Q** and current sensor **A1** may have negligible resistance, a current of magnitude approximately proportional to the voltage at leakage terminal **LT** may flow through the leakage circuit and be sensed by current sensor **A1**. For example, if the voltage at leakage terminal **LT** is 100V, and the resistor **R** is of resistance 100 kΩ, current sensor **A1** will sense a leakage current of

$$\frac{100 \text{ V}}{100 \text{ k}\Omega} = 1 \text{ mA.}$$

In some embodiments, PV device **107** may include a communication device for transmitting leakage current measurements to a management device configured to use the current measurements for appropriate calculations (not illustrated explicitly). Controller **214** may be similar to controller **220** described with regard to FIG. **11A**, and may further be configured to control the switching of switch **Q**. In some embodiments, a separate controller may be dedicated to switching switch **Q**. Communication device **212** may be configured to communicate with other system power devices for sending or receiving commands or data. For example, communication device **212** may be configured to provide measurements of a voltage or current at leakage terminal **LT**. Communication device **212** may be a wireless (e.g. a cellular, ZigBee™, WiFi™, Bluetooth™ or other wireless protocol) transceiver, or a wired communication device (for example, a device using Power Line Communications).

Returning to string **318**, in some embodiments each PV device **107** may comprise a leakage circuit similar to leakage circuit **108**. Each device may include a current sensor corresponding to sensor **A1**, and each current sensor may sense a different current, with the magnitude each sensed current indicating a proximity to the system power bus. For example, using the numerical example indicated in FIG. **17A**, if each PV device **107a**, **107b** . . . **107k** includes a leakage circuit coupled to the “low voltage” output of a power converter **211**, and each PV device includes an identical resistor $R=100 \text{ k}\Omega$, PV device **107a** may sense a current of approximately

$$\frac{0 \text{ V}}{100 \text{ k}\Omega} = 0 \text{ A.}$$

PV device **107b** may sense a current of approximately

$$\frac{25 \text{ V}}{100 \text{ k}\Omega} = 0.25 \text{ mA.}$$

PV device **107c** may sense a current of approximately

$$\frac{55 \text{ V}}{100 \text{ k}\Omega} = 0.55 \text{ mA.}$$

PV device **107j** may sense a current of approximately

$$\frac{650 \text{ V}}{100 \text{ k}\Omega} = 6.5 \text{ mA.}$$

PV device **107k** may sense a current of approximately

$$\frac{660.7 \text{ V}}{100 \text{ k}\Omega} = 6.607 \text{ mA.}$$

It may be observed that the closer a PV device is to the power bus, the higher the magnitude of the sensed current may be, and in some embodiments, it may be possible to estimate the relative order of the PV devices **107a** . . . **107k** with regard to the power bus by comparing the current magnitude sensed by each PV device.

Reference is now made to FIG. **17b**, which shows a leakage circuit according to an illustrative embodiment. PV device **1007** may be used instead of PV devices **107** in FIG. **17A**. For example, PV devices **107a-107k** of FIG. **17A** may be replaced by a corresponding plurality of PV devices **1007a-k**. PV device **1007** may comprise controller **214**, power converter **211** and communication device **212**, which may be the same as controller **214**, power converter **211** and communication device **212** of FIG. **17A**. PV device **1007** may feature a leakage terminal (**LT**) similar to that of PV device **107**. Leakage circuit **1008** may comprise voltage sensor **V1** and resistors **R1** and **R2**. Resistor **R2** may have a very large resistance, such as 100 MΩ, 1 GΩ, 2 GΩ or even 10 GΩ. **R1** may be substantially smaller than **R2**. For example, **R1** may have a resistance of under %1 of **R2**. A high-impedance current path may be provided between leakage terminal **LT** and the ground, via resistors **R1** and **R2**. **R1** and **R2** may be of sufficient resistance to hold leakage current to a small value, which may reduce losses due to the leakage current. For example, **R2** may be 5 GΩ and **R1** may be 10 MΩ, for a total resistance of 5.01 GΩ. If the voltage at **LT** is 500V, the leakage current will be about 100 μA. Voltage sensor **V1** may measure the voltage across resistor **R1**. Since **R2** may be much larger than **R1**, **R2** may absorb the majority of the voltage drop at leakage terminal **LT**. As an illustrative example, assume that **R2** is 99 times as large as **R1**, resulting in **R2** absorbing 99 percent of the voltage drop at **LT**, and **R2** absorbing 1 percent of the voltage drop at **LT**. If a series of PV devices **1007** are serially coupled, each having a leakage terminal and a leakage circuit **1008**, each respective voltage sensor **V1** of each respective leakage circuit **1008** will measure a voltage equal to about %1 of the voltage at the respective leakage terminal. By determining a relative order in magnitude of the respective voltage measurements, an order of the serially-coupled PV devices **1007** may be determined (e.g. by a centralized controller which may receive the voltage measurements measured by the respective voltage sensors).

FIG. 18 is a flow diagram of a method for determining the order of power devices within a PV string, which may be similar to the PV string illustrated in FIG. 17A. At step 170, some power devices may be considered “unsampled,” i.e. power devices at which leakage currents have not been sampled. At step 171, a power device from a group of unsampled devices may be selected. In some embodiments, a device may be selected from a group of unsampled devices at random. In some embodiments, a device may be selected from a group of unsampled devices according to predetermined criteria, such as according to an estimated location within a PV string. At step 172, a power device selected at step 171 is commanded to activate the power device’s leakage circuit. A power device command may be received via various communication methods, for example PLC and/or wireless communications, and the command may be sent by a system management unit. At step 173, upon reception of a command to activate a leakage circuit, a power device’s leakage circuit may be activated. A leakage circuit may be similar to the one illustrated in FIG. 17A, and an activation of a leakage circuit may comprise setting the switch Q to the ON position. A current sensor similar to the sensor A1 illustrated in FIG. 17A may measure a leakage current obtained when Q is at the ON position. At step 174, a leakage current may be measured and the measurement may be saved to a data logging device. The data logging device may comprise flash memory, EEPROM or other memory devices. At step 175, the power device selected at step 171 may be removed from the pool of unsampled devices, and a command may be issued to the power device to deactivate the power device’s leakage circuit. Deactivation may comprise setting the switch Q to the OFF state. At step 176 the method may determine if additional power devices are to be sampled. In some embodiments, the method will sample the leakage current of each power device in the string, and as long as there is at least one power device which has not yet activated its leakage circuit, the method will loop back to step 170. In some embodiments, the method may proceed to step 177 even if some power devices have not yet activated their respective leakage circuits. At step 177, the logged leakage current measurements may be compared, and based on the measurements, a relative order of power devices corresponding to the leakage current measurements may be estimated. For example, if three leakage currents have been measured, for example I_A , I_B , I_C , with the three current measurements corresponding to power devices D_A , D_B , D_C , and if $I_A < I_B < I_C$, then the method may determine that D_C may be the closest device of the three to the power bus, and that D_A may be the farthest of the three devices from the power bus. If leakage currents of all power devices in a PV string have been sampled, it may be possible in some embodiments to determine the order of all of the power devices in the string.

Reference is now made to FIG. 19, which illustrates a portion of a photovoltaic installation and a mapping Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) according to an illustrative embodiment. Photovoltaic (PV) installation 199 may comprise PV modules 191. One or more Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) 190 may be used to obtain Estimated Layout Map (ELM) of PV installation 199, i.e., to determine the relative order and/or location of PV modules 191. PV modules 191 may comprise PV generators (e.g. one or more PV cells, PV strings, PV substrings, PV panels, PV shingles, etc.) coupled to photovoltaic power devices (e.g. PV optimizers, DC/DC converters, DC/AC inverters). In some embodiments, each PV module 191 may comprise an identification label (ID label) which may be readable by UAV

190. The ID label may be a barcode, serial number, RFID tag, memory device or any other medium for containing information that can be read by an external device, with UAV 190 comprising an appropriate device for reading the ID label. For example, each PV module 191 may have an RFID tag, while UAV 190 may have an RFID reader. In some embodiments, each PV module 191 may have a barcode sticker, tag, while UAV 190 may have a barcode scanner. UAV 190 may have various functional devices similar to those comprising combined device 700 of FIG. 7. For example, UAV 190 may comprise controller 195, communication device 196, GPS device 194, ID reader 193, and data logging device 192, which may be similar to or the same as ID reader 203, GPS device 201, data logging device 202, controller 205, and communication device 206 of FIG. 7.

In some embodiments, UAV 190 may automatically read the ID tag of each of PV modules 191. In some embodiments, UAV 190 may be in proximity to each PV module at the time the PV module’s ID tag is read, and use GPS device 194 to estimate the coordinates of the PV module being scanned. The method of FIG. 2A may be used to generate an ELM of the PV installation using the measured or estimated GPS coordinates of the PV modules.

UAV 190 may be variously realized. For example, a drone, miniature helicopter, remote-controlled airplane or various other UAVs may be utilized.

In some embodiments, UAV 190 may comprise a thermal camera. For example, camera 197 may be a thermal camera for obtaining a thermal image of PV installation 199, and by taking multiple thermal images of PV installation 199 over time, relative locations of PV modules may be estimated for generating an ELM, using methods disclosed herein.

Reference is now made to FIG. 20, which illustrates thermal properties of photovoltaic generators (e.g. photovoltaic panels) which may be featured in accordance with methods and apparatuses disclosed herein. Some types of photovoltaic panels may generate increased heat when photovoltaic power generated by the panel is not provided to an electrical load. Photovoltaic power may be generated by a PV panel as a result of photovoltaic cells mounted on the PV panel absorbing solar irradiance. When an electrical load is coupled to a PV panel, some of the absorbed solar irradiance may be converted to electrical power provided to the load. If no electrical load (or a reduced electrical load) is coupled to the PV panel, an increased portion of the absorbed irradiance may be converted to heat, which may result in an increased temperature of the PV panel. If an electrical load is coupled to a PV panel, but the load only draws a small portion of the PV power produced by the panel, the panel temperature may be lower than the temperature when compared to the “no-load” case, but may be higher than the temperature that would be measured if an electrical load drew an increased amount of PV power from the PV panel.

FIG. 20 illustrates an illustrative thermal image of a group of PV generators (which may be used as PV modules 191 of FIG. 19). PV generators 2001b may be providing a first level of electrical power (e.g. 300 watts) to a load, PV generators 2001c may be providing a second level of electrical power (e.g. 200 watts) to an electrical load, and PV generators 2001a may be providing a third, lower level of electrical power (e.g. 50 W) to an electrical load, or might not be providing any electrical power to a load. All of PV generators 2001a-2001c may be irradiated by substantially the same level of solar irradiance. As indicated by temperature bar 2002, a reduced provision of electrical power to a load may increase

a temperature of an associated PV generator in a manner (e.g. by about 4° C.) which may be visually detectable by a thermal image.

Reference is now made to FIG. 20, which illustrates a thermal image portion of a photovoltaic string according to an illustrative embodiment. PV panels **2001a-2001f** may be coupled in series or in parallel to form part of a PV string. At the time the thermal image was obtained, PV panels **2001a-2001e** were coupled to an electrical load, and PV panel **2001f** was not coupled to an electrical load. PV panel **2001f** may be observed to be visually distinguishable compared to PV panels **2001a-2001e**.

Referring back to FIG. 19, camera **197** may be used to obtain thermal images similar to the thermal images illustrated in FIGS. **20A-20C**, with controller **195** configured to implement a method for determining a ELM from images obtained by camera **197**. A succession of thermal images similar to the images of FIGS. **20A-20C** may be obtained and stored in data logging device **192**, with controller **195** configured to read the images from data logging device **192** for processing.

Reference is now made to FIG. 21, which illustrates a method for installation mapping according to one or more illustrative aspects of the disclosure. Method **2100** may be carried out by a controller comprised by a UAV (e.g. controller **195** of FIG. 19), or by a system-level controller in communication with PV modules and/or a UAV, or by a combination thereof. For illustrative purposes, it will be assumed that method **2100** is carried out by controller **195** of FIG. 19 and applied to PV modules **191** of FIG. 19. Each PV module **191** may comprise a PV power device capable of increasing or decreasing the electrical power drawn from the PV model. For example, in some embodiments, each PV module **191** may comprise a disconnect switch configured to disconnect the PV module from a string of PV modules which coupled to an electrical load. By disconnecting a selected PV module from the string of PV modules, the selected PV module may cease providing power to the electrical load, and the temperature of the selected PV module may rise. In some embodiments, each PV module **191** may be coupled to an optimizer, each optimizer configured to increase or reduce the power drawn from the corresponding PV module.

PV power devices coupled to PV modules **191** may be in communication with a controller carrying out method **2100** or part thereof. For example, PV power devices coupled to PV modules **191** may comprise wireless communication devices configured to communicate with communication device **196** of UAV **190**.

Method **2100** may be applied to a group of PV modules without regard for interconnectivity. Method **2100** may effectively map PV modules which are electrically connected (e.g. modules which are part of the same PV string) and may effectively map PV modules which are not electrically connected (e.g. modules which are part of different PV strings).

At the start of method **2100**, at step **1220**, all PV modules in the group are considered “untested”. At step **1221**, a controller (i.e. the controller carrying out method **2100** or part of method **2100**) may select a PV module from the pool of untested PV modules. At step **1222**, the controller reduces the electrical power drawn from the selected PV module. For example, the controller may command a PV power device (e.g. a disconnect switch or an optimizer) coupled to the PV module to reduce the electrical power drawn from the PV module (e.g. by disconnected the PV module from a load, or

by operating the PV module at an operating point which reduces the power drawn from the PV module.

After the electrical power drawn from the PV module is reduced, it may take several minutes for the temperature of the PV module to substantially rise. The controller may wait for a period of time (e.g. 3, 5, 10 or 20 minutes) before proceeding to step **1223**.

At step **1223**, the controller may control a thermal imaging device (e.g. camera **197**) to obtain a thermal image of the group of PV modules. At step **1224**, the controller may analyze the thermal image to find “hot spots”, e.g., areas in the image which indicate a higher temperature. In some embodiments, the thermal image may comprise temperature measurements which may be numerically compared. In some embodiments, the thermal image may be represented by pixels of varying colors and/or shades of gray, with the controller configured to process the image and detect areas comprising pixels which may be indicative of a higher temperature (e.g. red, or darker shades of gray).

At step **1225**, the controller may estimate the relative location of a hot spot detected at step **1224**. For example, the controller may determine that the group of PV modules comprises nine PV modules placed side-by-side (e.g. similar to the depiction of FIG. 20C), with the fourth PV module from the right (i.e. PV module **2001**) hotter than the rest. In some embodiments, the controller may have estimated physical coordinates of one of the PV modules, and may use the estimated coordinates as an “anchor” node for estimating locations of the other PV modules. In some embodiments, the controller may determine a relative ordering or relational placements (e.g. to the right of, to the left of, in front of, behind) of the PV modules in the group, and aggregate the relational placements to generate a ELM.

In an embodiment, method **2100** may be adapted to have all PV devices initially not providing substantial power to an electrical load. The method may be adapted at step **1222** to increase the electrical power drawn from the selected PV module, at steps **1224-1225** to detect and estimate “cold spot” locations, and at step **1226** to decrease the electrical power drawn from the selected PV module.

At step **1226**, the PV module selected at step **1221** is removed from the group of untested PV modules, and the power drawn from the selected PV module is increased (e.g. by commanding a disconnect switch to reconnect the PV module to an electrical load, or commanding an optimizer to operate the PV module at an increased-power operating point).

At step **1227**, the controller determines if untested PV modules remain, i.e., if there are PV modules in the group which have not yet been selected at step **1221**. If untested PV modules remain, the controller may loop back to step **1221**. If no untested PV modules remain, the controller may proceed to step **1228**.

At step **1228**, the controller may aggregate the hot spot locations estimated at step **1225** over the method iterations, to produce an estimated ELM.

In an alternative embodiment, thermal images obtained at step **1223** may be saved to memory, with steps **1224-1225** carried out after the final iteration of step **1227**. In other words, analysis of thermal images may be delayed until after a full set of thermal images (one per iteration through steps **1221-1227**) has been obtained. In a preferred embodiment, steps **1224-1225** are carried out in the order indicated in FIG. 21, to enable the controller to repeat iterations if needed. For example, method **2100** may comprise an additional step of ensuring that a “hot spot” has been detected at step **1224**, and in the event that the method has not identified

a hot spot in the thermal image obtained at step 1223, having the method loop back to step 1221, or alternatively, wait an additional several minutes and then loop back to step 1223.

Method 2100 may be combined with other methods disclosed herein, for example, to increase the accuracy of ELMs and PIMs generated by methods disclosed herein. For example, method 2100 may be used to obtain an initial ELM, with the method of FIG. 18 used for validation (or vice-versa).

In some embodiments, reference was made to “upper” and “lower” junction box portions. This language was used for ease and is not intended to be limiting. In some embodiments, the two portions may be side-by-side, and/or functional circuitry may be transferred from one junction box portion to other, in a manner that allows them to be in electrical communication when coupled to one another.

In the illustrative embodiments disclosed herein, PV modules are used to exemplify energy sources which may make use of the novel features disclosed. In some embodiments, the energy sources may include batteries, wind or hydroelectric turbines, fuel cells or other energy sources in addition to or instead of PV modules. The current routing methods and other techniques disclosed herein may be applied to alternative energy sources such as those listed above, and the mentioning of PV modules as energy sources is for illustrative purposes only and not intended to be limiting in this respect. For example, any other energy sources or combination of energy sources may be used.

It is noted that various connections are set forth between elements herein. These connections are described in general and, unless specified otherwise, may be direct or indirect; this specification is not intended to be limiting in this respect. Further, elements of one embodiment may be combined with elements from other embodiments in appropriate combinations or subcombinations.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus comprising:

a power electronics device comprising output terminals configured to output electrical power at an electrical current value;

a communication circuit configured to receive a command to change a voltage or an impedance of the output terminals, wherein the command comprises information identifying the power electronics device; and

a controller configured to, based on the command, change the voltage or the impedance of the output terminals independent of the electrical current value.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the power electronics device comprises at least one element from the group consisting of a direct current (DC) to DC converter, a DC to alternating current (AC) converter, a photovoltaic module, a junction box, a Maximum Power Point Tracking (MPPT) circuit, a sensor circuit, a fuse, a variable impedance circuit, a switch, and a circuit breaker.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the communication circuit comprises a wireless interface or a power line communication interface.

4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the communication circuit comprises the wireless interface, and wherein the controller is configured to retrieve, from the wireless interface, at least one measured or estimated value from the group consisting of a Received Signal Strength Indication (RSSI), an Angle or Direction of Arrival, and Time Difference of Arrival (TDOA).

5. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the communication circuit comprises the power line communication interface, and wherein the controller is configured to use time domain

reflectometry via the power line communication interface to determine an order of other apparatuses serially connected to the output terminals.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the power electronics device comprises input terminals, and wherein the controller is further configured to control an operational parameter of one or more photovoltaic (PV) modules coupled to the input terminals of the power electronics device, wherein the operational parameter is a parameter from the group consisting of a voltage, a current, a temperature, and an impedance.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the information identifying the power electronics device distinguishes the power electronics device from one or more other power electronics devices.

8. A method comprising:

receiving a command, using a communication circuit of a power electronics device comprising output terminals, to change a voltage or an impedance of the output terminals, wherein the power electronics device is configured to output electrical power using the output terminals at an electrical current value, and wherein the command comprises information identifying the power electronics device;

comparing, by a controller of the power electronics device, the identifying information of the received command with the identifying information of the power electronics device; and

when a match exists, changing the voltage or the impedance of the output terminals to comply with the command independent of the electrical current value.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the power electronics device comprises at least one element from the group consisting of a direct current (DC) to DC converter, a DC to alternating current (AC) converter, a photovoltaic module, a junction box, a Maximum Power Point Tracking (MPPT) circuit, a sensor circuit, a fuse, a variable impedance circuit, and a circuit breaker.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein the communication circuit comprises a wireless interface or a power line communication interface.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the communication circuit comprises the wireless interface, and wherein the controller is configured to retrieve, from the wireless interface, at least one measured or estimated value from the group consisting of a Received Signal Strength Indication (RSSI), an Angle or Direction of Arrival, and Time Difference of Arrival (TDOA).

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the communication circuit comprises the power line communication interface, and wherein the controller is configured to use time domain reflectometry via the power line communication interface to determine an order of other apparatuses serially connected to the output terminals.

13. An apparatus, comprising:

a communication circuit configured to transmit and receive information; and

a controller configured to:

send a command, using the communication circuit, to a first power device comprising output terminals to change a voltage or an impedance of the output terminals independent of an electrical current value;

receive, using the communication circuit, output parameters reported by a plurality of power devices; and

31

determine, by analyzing the output parameters and the command, which power devices of the plurality of power devices are serially coupled to the first power device.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising at least one element from the group consisting of a DC to DC converter, a DC to AC converter, a photovoltaic module, a junction box, a MPPT circuit, a sensor circuit, a fuse, a variable impedance circuit, a switch, and a circuit breaker.

15. The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising a DC to AC converter configured to receive solar energy from the plurality of power devices, convert the solar energy by modifying at least one electrical parameter of the solar energy, and send the converted solar energy to an electrical network.

16. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the communication circuit comprises a wireless interface or a power line communication interface.

17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the communication circuit comprises the wireless interface, and wherein the controller is configured to retrieve, from the wireless interface, at least one measured or estimated value from the group consisting of a Received Signal Strength Indication (RSSI), an Angle or Direction of Arrival, and Time Difference of Arrival (TDOA).

18. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the communication circuit comprises the power line communication interface, and wherein the controller is configured to use time domain reflectometry via the power line communication interface to determine an order of other apparatuses serially connected to the output terminals.

32

19. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the controller and the communication circuit are incorporated into a computer system.

20. A system comprising:

a plurality of power sources;

a plurality of power devices, each power device coupled to a respective at least one power source of the plurality of power sources, wherein at least some of the plurality of power devices are connected to form a serial string; and

a system power device configured to send a command, via a communication device, to a selected power device of the plurality of power devices to change a voltage or an impedance of output terminals of the selected power device independent of electrical current between the output terminals;

and wherein the system power device comprises:

the communication device; and

a controller configured to:

send the command to the selected power device wherein the command comprises information identifying the selected power device;

receive electrical parameters from the plurality of power devices; and

analyze the electrical parameters and the command to determine which of the plurality of power devices are serially connected to the selected power device.

* * * * *